

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE COLLEGE STUDENT DISCIPLINARY
SUSPENSION AND REENROLLMENT EXPERIENCE

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Dedication

Dedico este trabajo con amor y agradecimiento a mi padre, Isaac, y a mi madre, Alicia.

Gracias por su amor, esfuerzo, y sacrificio.

Querer es poder, y fuerza es voluntad.

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Abstract

This study fills the gap in the literature by analyzing the college student disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience. Additionally, this study highlights and assesses the educational nature of higher education student conduct systems. The following research questions were answered: How do college students experience disciplinary suspensions?; Why do college students choose to reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension?; How do college student experience reenrollment following a disciplinary suspension? In order to understand their lived experiences, six college students from different institutions engaged in semi-structured interviews, using a phenomenological approach. Schlossberg's (1981) Transition theory and Karp and Clear's (2000) community justice model were used to analyze common lived experiences among these college students and delve into the internal and external factors that influenced these experiences. This study demonstrated that disciplinary suspensions are dynamic and multi-faceted, provide growth and development for college students, and can be a meaningful and important part of the college student conduct process.

Keywords: college, disciplinary, experience, reenrollment, suspension

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

When a college student allegedly violates the institution's rules, otherwise known as the code of conduct, the case will be processed and adjudicated using the institution's student conduct procedures. Through this process, if the student is found to have violated the code of conduct, the student could be assigned a sanction. These sanctions vary in severity, depending on the misconduct, and can include a suspension. If the student is suspended, the student will not be allowed to enroll in the institution for a specified amount of time. After that time frame, the student is able to reenroll. What did the student do during the suspension and why? Will the college student reenroll to the institution? What is unique about the students that reenroll? Why, and how, do students reenroll after a disciplinary suspension?

This study seeks to respond to the questions above by presenting analyses of college students who experience a disciplinary suspension and then choose to reenroll. As a result, this study produces several contributions such as providing a greater understanding of college disciplinary systems as places of learning, growth and development, an appraisal of the educational value of college student disciplinary suspensions, and an examination of the college reenrollment experience.

This chapter discusses the importance of engaging in this research, the purpose of this study, and my positionality as a researcher. In an effort to provide a solid foundation, explanation, and understanding for this study, Chapter 2 will provide a summary and synthesis of relevant literature and seminal pieces regarding higher education student conduct research. Chapter 3 will discuss and justify the methodology I executed in order to execute this study, including the selected theoretical frameworks. Chapter 4 will provide a discussion of my findings based on common lived experiences of the participants. Finally, Chapter 5 will provide

recommendations and implications for research, practice, and theories, and an overall conclusion to this dissertation.

Purpose of the Study

The central purpose of this study is to examine the educational nature of the college student disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience, including why college student reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension. Although many aspects of the student suspension experience have been researched, studied, and analyzed in the K-12 system (Anyon, Jenson, Altschul, Farrar, McQueen, Greer, & Simmons, 2014; Bekkerman & Gilpin, 2016; Moreno & Segura-Herrera, 2014; Robinett, 2012; Seider, Gilbert, Novick, & Gomez, 2013; Vanderhaar, Munoz, & Petrosko, 2015), college student disciplinary suspensions in higher education settings remain widely unexplored. According to Pavela (2008), most college disciplinary systems and processes aim to be educational. Along with a fair sanction, the intent is to have students learn when applicable, as part of the educational process, which is often overseen by student conduct officers (Pavela, 2008). Overall, the goal of student conduct officers is to be transformative in their work by helping students develop metamorphic learning skills for themselves and the world in which they live (Lopez-Phillips & Trageser, 2008). As part of their work, typical sanctions imposed by student conduct administrators include oral and written fines, suspension, and expulsion (Lake, 2010).

Specifically, scholars have defined suspension as “a separation of the student from the college or university for a definite period of time, after which the student is eligible to return” (Stoner & Lowery, 2004, p. 55). However, not all students that are eligible to reenroll after serving a suspension actually return. In addition, characteristics and traits vary for students who are suspended and then choose to reenroll (Stimpson & Janosik, 2007). Stimpson and Janosik’s

(2007) seminal study discovered that students who reenroll after a disciplinary suspension are more likely to be male than female, have a higher grade point average (GPA) than those who do not reenroll, and tend to have been charged with minor, rather than major, conduct violations. In addition, minorities, younger, single, and recently unemployed students who have earned more college credits, and hold strong beliefs about the value of education, tend to reenroll (Schatzel, Callahan, & Davis, 2013). A brief history of student conduct administration can assist in better understanding how these conclusions were made and how they can be built upon.

Student Conduct

Some institutions view student discipline as a way of guiding the moral development of students, the duty of institutions to train the intellect, a legalistic perspective as a way of protecting the educational environment, or a combination of any of these three elements (Dannells, 1997). Dannells (1997) focused on one of these philosophies and stated that student discipline continues to be an excellent opportunity for developmental efforts. As a byproduct of this philosophy, it can be stated that sanctions, such as suspensions, are ways of protecting the educational environment while providing an educational experience. In practice, most institutions of higher education follow this philosophy in one way or another since, “It is difficult to identify a college or university conduct code that does not list suspension as one of several types of sanctions” (Stimpson & Janosik, 2007, p. 496). Dannells (1997) also found that given the complexity of student conduct, it should be carefully examined so that recommendations for improvement can be provided. Additionally, Dannells (1997) called for institutional research on existing student conduct programs with the intention of determining their effectiveness. This call to action stems from the apparent gaps in student conduct research within higher education.

Absence of Student Conduct Research in Higher Education

As opposed to higher education settings, student conduct in the K-12 system has been widely researched. Specifically, issues of gender (Bain & MacPherson, 1990; Cooley, 1995; Gregory et al, 1996, 2010; KewelRamani et al., 2007; Shaw & Braden, 1990), language (Burke, 2015), race (Bekkerman & Gilpin, 2016; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006; Losen, 2011; Moreno & Segura-Herrera, 2014; Seager, Madura, Cox, & Carey, 2015), issues of alternatives to suspensions (Anyon et al., 2014; Morris & Perry, 2016; Skiba et al., 2014) and the actual suspension experience (Quin & Hemphill, 2014) exist in this sector. However, the opposite is true for higher education.

The scarcity in student conduct research within higher education is alarming since the relationship between higher education and student conduct reflects institutions' attitudes about students, how institutions define their duty towards students, and institutions' relationships with students (Dannells, 1997). The perception of students, the effects on work, and the relationships established with students are important because they directly affect the student experience. For example, a student's overall experience with a student conduct office may be influenced by negative student perceptions of the office, its staff, and their procedures. However, even though there is a direct impact on the student experience, Bostic and Gonzalez (1999) asserted that policies, processes and procedures within student conduct remain unaddressed in the literature.

The fact is that there is a lack of research on student misconduct beyond due process issues (Dannells, 1990; Janosik, 2007; Kompalla & McCarthy, 2001; VanKuren & Creamer, 1989). This lack of research in student conduct within higher education has possible negative impacts on institutions, professionals, and students. Not having in-depth, valid, reliable, and

quality research for practitioners on how to work with college students within the disciplinary suspension arena is a disservice to everyone involved in the overall student conduct process.

This should not be the status quo and according to Dannells (1997), “The almost total lack of disciplinary case studies in the professional literature is surprising and should be remedied” (p. 97). This deficiency is also prevalent from due process issues to best practices to specific sanctions such as disciplinary suspensions. For example, “There is little published research on how a disciplinary suspension is used or its results” (Stimpson & Janosik, 2007, p. 496). Higher education should follow K-12’s lead in exploring these topics. As an example, Quin and Hemphill (2014) researched the student suspension at the K-12 level. Therefore, in an effort to expand the knowledge in this area, a similar type of study should be conducted within higher education.

Stimpson and Janosik (2007) closed part of this critical gap in the literature through a quantitative study on college student disciplinary suspensions. As part of their research, Stimpson and Janosik (2007) stated, “No studies were identified that examined the number of students who reenroll following a disciplinary suspension” (Stimpson & Janosik, 2007, p. 508). Through their study, Stimpson and Janosik (2007) concluded that 79.6% of students reenrolled for at least one subsequent semester after being suspended. Further details on this critical study are shared in the following chapter. However, Stimpson and Janosik (2007) identified, “Much is still unknown about students who are suspended for disciplinary reasons” (p. 509), further reinforcing the need to expand on the existing limited research on this topic.

But how prevalent are college student disciplinary suspensions, and why should this be researched? According to Stimpson and Janosik (2007), “We do not know about the numbers of students who return to college after serving a disciplinary suspension, in what activities students

engage while serving a disciplinary suspension, or the educational value of the disciplinary suspension” (p. 498). It is important to explore this topic since “the activities a student engages in while serving a suspension may influence the decision to reenroll” (Stimpson & Janosik, 2007, p. 505). But why does it matter if a student reenrolls, or not? According to Stimpson and Janosik (2007), “If in fact student conduct systems are educational, it only stands to reason that one goal of disciplinary suspension would be the eventual reenrollment and graduation of the suspended student” (p. 496). Therefore, engaging in this research would close the loop on the student conduct process as well as fulfilling its intended mission.

As opportunities for future research and potential findings, Stimpson and Janosik (2007) hypothesized, “Other variables that affect reenrollment decisions might include involvement of family members, educational goals, commitment, and maturation” (p. 505). Even though suspensions are sanctions that are used in higher education student conduct processes, much is unknown and unexplored about this sanction overall. This highlights the need and opportunity for additional research. Stimpson and Janosik (2007) also asserted, “If in fact the student conduct process is an educational endeavor as many claim, time must be spent investigating the educative value of student conduct systems” (p. 509). Therefore, time and effort must be spent exploring the educative value of suspensions, as part of student conduct systems by going beyond a stated time frame indicating that the student is removed from an institution for misconduct. As specified by Stimpson and Janosik (2007), “. . . if the student conduct adjudication process is meant to be educational, examining the likelihood of reenrollment should [be] part of the decision making process” (p. 509). However, there is also limited knowledge on why a student might reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension. These gaps demonstrate that student

conduct administrators do not have the complete tools, language, or student voices in order to determine the appropriateness of a suspension and determine the likelihood of reenrollment.

Importance of Student Conduct Research in Higher Education and Reenrollment

According to Waryold and Lancaster (2008), “Student conduct administration as a functional unit of student affairs is ripe with opportunities to educate the student . . .” (p. 9). Additional questions arise after thinking about this statement. Besides the actual length of the disciplinary suspension, how can the educational nature of a disciplinary suspension be measured? Why is this important and why should we care? Should part of the student conduct process and goals also include interest for whether or not a student reenrolls after serving a disciplinary suspension? What is a student conduct administrator’s responsibility beyond ensuring due process? Are suspensions a strategy for removing “problem student” from the institution?

The student conduct process, including sanctioning and its educational nature, are the responsibility of student conduct officers and institutional leadership. It has been stated that disciplinary sanctions have an educational focus. Interestingly, suspensions are the only sanction that takes place off-campus, while a student is not directly connected to the institution. Is successful fulfillment of a disciplinary suspension only determined by length of the disciplinary suspension, or can a student’s lived experience during a disciplinary suspension demonstrate learning? Should any factors be accounted for or systems be set in place to ensure that the student reenrolls? Stimpson and Janosik (2007) hoped that “the information in [their] study might be used to determine the likelihood of a student reenrolling” (p. 509). Additional research is needed since “. . . institutional research should be done on existing disciplinary programs to determine their present effectiveness” (Dannells, 1997, p. 6). Therefore, building upon Stimpson

and Janosik's (2007) research could provide a deeper understanding of the likelihood of a college student reenrolling after serving a disciplinary suspension.

Student reenrollment is important for various reasons. For example, students who obtain their college degrees tend to fare better than their counterparts who do not return to school; they are more likely to secure higher salaries, more likely to maintain economic security throughout their lives, and less likely to be incarcerated (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2014). One other economic impact highlighting the importance of making sure that students reenroll in an effort to finish their degree is that unemployment rates are significantly lower for college graduates compared to those without a college degree (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Students who finish a college degree are less likely to be incarcerated (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). As a result, a student that does not reenroll might be one of these unemployed and/or incarcerated statistics.

Additionally, there is an economic impact on the individual states, since a state loses its capital investment on higher education (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2014) when students depart from higher education, as a result of a suspension being one example. There is a second economic impact on states, demonstrating why students should reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension. Reenrollment will aid in helping the student graduate, which in turn, is beneficial to the state since on average, a student with a degree can earn more taxable income than a student with no degree (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). How can the investment of states on students be analyzed beyond its monetary value?

As a way of answering this question, it is important to return to Stimpson and Janosik's (2007) findings regarding students who reenrolled in college after serving a disciplinary suspension. Their study collected demographic information, which resulted in increased

knowledge regarding common characteristics among students that tend to reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension. However, their specific experiences are unknown. As a way of exploring their thought process, it is important to gather and analyze their stories. This type of study could help assess the educational value of college student disciplinary suspension among other things. Similarly, Kompalla and McCarty (2001) advocated for additional research,

In particular, further investigation into the effectiveness of specific sanctions for particular violations is warranted. . . . The sanction is an important part of the student discipline process. Student development theory can assist campus judicial officers with the creation of effective and appropriate conduct sanctions that have significant potential for influencing college student behavior. ([no page #])

Research Objective

Most existing research has explored why college students were suspended or what led to suspensions. In contrast, this study will explore college students' experiences once they are suspended, and what might contribute to their decisions to reenroll. This study highlights and assesses the educational nature of higher education student conduct systems through the disciplinary suspension with the additional aids of appropriate theoretical and methodological frameworks. For the purposes of this study, academic dishonesty cases such as cheating and plagiarism will be classified as disciplinary for the following reason: they do not involve a student's failure to maintain a specific grade point average, and instead, they involve a violation of the institution's code of conduct.

Ultimately, this study fills the gap in the literature by further analyzing the college student disciplinary suspension experience, including why college students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension as a result of a student conduct process, and gives voice to the college

student suspension experience. This includes exploring: why students chose to reenroll, what processes they navigated in order to reenroll, their disposition towards reenrolling and returning to campus, and their immediate experiences following reenrollment. Student conduct administrators can gain a greater understanding of college disciplinary systems as places of learning by analyzing the student disciplinary suspensions through the lived experiences of students who reenroll after serving a suspension. By exploring the college student disciplinary suspension experience and further analyzing why students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension, I provide a greater understanding of conduct systems as places of student learning. This study gives voice to the actual students' experiences who reenroll in their institution after serving a disciplinary suspension, which informs student conduct administration and student affairs practices.

Research questions were central in this exploration. According to van Manen (2014) "A phenomenological question explores what is given in . . . experiences as we live through them" (p. 27). Therefore, this study generated the following research questions.

- 1) How do college students experience disciplinary suspensions?
- 2) Why do college students choose to reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension?
- 3) How do college student experience reenrollment following a disciplinary suspension?

In order to answer these three questions, certain terms must be defined in order to fully understand the context of this study.

Definitions of Terms

A variety of terms will be used for this study on the college student disciplinary suspension experience. In an effort to increase understanding, the following terms have been defined based on the literature and operationally for this study.

Disciplinary suspension: is a “separation of the student from the college or university for a definite period of time, after which the student is eligible to return” (Lancaster & Waryold, 2008, p. 67).

College student: will be defined as a student that has enrolled in a college or university.

Conduct: will be defined as a student’s actions.

Disciplinary: will be defined as actual conduct that violates a student code of conduct as opposed to academic performance.

Educational: will be defined as a type of consequence or sanction intended to promote personal responsibility while allowing the college student to learn, grow, and develop in the future.

Preponderance of the evidence: is a standard of proof needed to show that the facts are “more likely to be than not so” (Long, 1985, p. 74).

Reenroll: will be defined as a college student returning to an institution for an unspecified amount of time, taking an unspecified amount of credits or instructional hours.

Responsible: will be used as a finding of the student engaging in behavior that violated an institution’s student code of conduct.

Sanction: will be defined as a consequence that a student must complete as part of the student conduct process.

Organization of the Study

Through a phenomenological approach, this study will situate the actual disciplinary suspension as a transition and as a phenomenon, which will be further explained in Chapter 3. Phenomenology as a research approach will be key in exploring the college student disciplinary suspension since it is both a lived experience and a phenomenon. Therefore, my study highlights Schlossberg’s transition theory given its explanation of how college students experience

transitions and changes. Additionally, my study will also be approached using Karp and Clear's (2000) community justice model given the direct applicability of its four principles for student judicial practices.

Phenomenology

The abyss of the unknown regarding the college student disciplinary suspensions includes many unanswered questions. But what is the best approach to get answers and why? An apparent approach is phenomenology, which aims to unearth the lived experiences of individuals (van Manen, 2014). Exploring the core of an experience, including what was experienced and how it was experienced, can achieve this (Barker & Mamiseishvili, 2014). Phenomenology allows the researcher to describe a phenomenon or story through the participants' lens and not the researcher's lens (van Manen, 2014).

A phenomenological approach was used since my study aimed to explore how students live through and experience a disciplinary suspension. Additionally, and as stated above, gaps in existing research have sparked curiosity and wonder, which are essential characteristics for this approach. According to van Manen (2014), "Phenomenological research begins with wonder at what gives itself and how something gives itself" (p. 27). This idea further reinforced phenomenology as an appropriate approach for this study.

Phenomenology informed my research questions, data gathering and analysis. For example, the core of the student suspension experience was explored through semi-structured interviews, which follows a phenomenological approach. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive coding as described by Saldaña (2016). Chapter 3 provides a thorough overview and rationale for this phenomenological approach.

Theoretical Frameworks

The “why” and the “how” regarding college student disciplinary suspensions was not captured in Stimpson and Janosik’s (2007) quantitative research, nor among other studies, regarding college student disciplinary suspensions. Additionally, according to Dannells (1997), “If traditional quantitative methods do not seem to convey the richness of data needed by disciplinary practitioners, then qualitative methods should be encouraged” (p. 97). Therefore, new qualitative data could highlight new perspectives. Dannells (1997) supported the same idea and argued, “Well written, detailed stories, that link problems to theory and interventions in thoughtful ways, would be an important contribution to the literature” (p. 97).

A phenomenological approach to this topic that links the lack of research on college student disciplinary suspensions to a well-identified theoretical framework begins to fill this void in the literature. Dannells (1997) stated that “. . . student development theories need to be operationalized and tested in the disciplinary context” (p. 7). This study does so since it will use two theoretical frameworks in its design and data analyses.

The first theoretical framework used was Schlossberg’s (1981) transition theory. Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012) have evolved this model to demonstrate how individuals adapt to transition, and found that transitions provide opportunities for growth and development. Additional factors will be analyzed in order to understand the meaning of a transition. In order to achieve this design and analysis, the disciplinary suspension will be situated as an acknowledged transition.

A second theoretical framework used was Karp and Clear’s (2000) community justice model. Karp’s (2004) application of the community justice model within student conduct was ideal for this study since it references a direct application to the student conduct system, process,

sanctions, and impact on the individual being sanctioned. Therefore, in order to understand the college student disciplinary suspension experience, a viable next step was conducting semi-structured interviews through a phenomenological lens.

Positionality

In an attempt to bring transparency to my research, it is important to reflect on and share my positionality and experiences as it affects my work as a researcher (Turner, 2010). My interpretations were affected by my lived experiences in student affairs. A part of this reflection is stating my prejudices since “Prejudices are not only unavoidable, they are necessary, as long as they are self-reflectively aware” (van Manen, 2014, p. 354). As part of this self-reflection, I have included the following.

My lived experiences in education and in my environment have contributed to my understanding of me, and will influence my positionality as a researcher. Some of my identities are fluid and invisible, while others are permanent and visible. I am aware of how others might perceive me, especially while conducting research. I hope to continue to challenge myself, and allow myself to be challenged by others, in order to be a successful researcher. One of my core beliefs is that higher education is a right and not a privilege.

There are several ways in which my story molded the structure of this project and will continue to impact my future research. Therefore, I need to remember that there are many systems in place that prevent individuals from achieving their educational goals. This perception impacts my perception of student conduct systems if I were to believe that the student conduct systems might be interfering with students’ right to an education by suspending students.

I have grown up respecting authority. In this context, student conduct systems represent authority figures. For over eight years, I collaborated with student conduct offices on various

projects and roles. I served as the Co-Chair for the Student Conduct Appellate Board and as a Title IX investigator for an institution. Both of these experiences allowed me to collaborate closely with student conduct staff, and for me to be well versed in the policies and procedures of the offices. I greatly respect and admire what they do. I have constantly seen them as role models and sought guidance in specific discipline cases. Currently, I oversee conduct program as part of a larger student leadership office. Therefore, I am conscious of the fact that this might produce bias in my study. In creating my interview questions, it was important for me to not see the questions as a “quiz” for students, and instead, allow them to share their story with me.

On a personal note, I have struggled to find a sense of belonging throughout my educational journey. I hope to conduct purposeful research so that students and administrators can have a greater sense of belonging in institutions of higher education. I am working on understanding some of my privileges, and how these might influence research I conduct. I am Isaac Alejandro Rodriguez Lupercio: an educated, queer, Catholic, immigrant, Latino, man from Mexico. This research and degree will allow me to work within our current educational system and make institutions of higher education a more efficient and transparent place for professionals to work in and make education a more attainable goal for students.

By conducting this study through a phenomenological perspective, I engaged in the epoche, which in turn allowed me to address these biases. According to van Manen, 2014, “The epoche is the critical phenomenological device that should defeat bias that occurs from unexamined assumptions personal or systematic prejudices, close-mindedness, and so on” (p. 354). Additional information on phenomenology and the epoche will be shared in Chapter 3.

Conclusion

It is important to engage in qualitative research within higher education student conduct. This study fills a major gap in the literature by analyzing the college student disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience. Chapter 2, Literature Review, will provide a comprehensive overview of higher education student conduct systems and sanctions. It demonstrates a summary and synthesis of the literature on this topic, identifies the gaps within the literature, and outlines seminal pieces of work related to the overall college student disciplinary suspension experience.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although often considered similar, higher education student conduct systems are quite different than legal systems. In order to highlight this difference, a short description of the United States criminal justice system is provided, followed by a detailed description of higher education conduct systems. A discussion on the student conduct system's educational and developmental philosophies, including sanctioning, is also provided. Additionally, key differences are highlighted between higher education and the criminal justice systems. Restorative justice as a philosophical approach in higher education student conduct systems is discussed.

Higher education student conduct systems and criminal justice systems are rooted in providing due process. Even though both are fundamentally fair, they differ in philosophy and practice. Student conduct administrators, codes of conduct, due process, and sanctions are all components of the higher education conduct systems' educational philosophy, which is more student-centered and educational than the criminal justice system.

The Criminal Justice System

Due process is a requirement of the constitution, practiced in the criminal justice system in the United States, composed of local, state and federal agencies, and officials, which has become the most complex in the world (Lake, 2011). Within that system, laws at various levels list the ways that people can harm each other and serve as a declaration by society as to what is deemed unacceptable (Wright, 2004). Depending on the severity, this unacceptable behavior can be labeled as a crime, which is a behavior against a law that can be punished (Wright, 2004). However, the definition of a crime can be fluid since it is also a function of an evolution of social, legal and political definitions (Cornwell, 2006).

Criminal prosecution is brought by the state or the nation on behalf of the interests of society, while civil lawsuits are brought by aggrieved individuals and are not criminal cases. Civil cases are private suits brought in civil court, as opposed to criminal court. For example, a rape is a crime and the state brings the action in order to punish the criminal on behalf of society. Meanwhile, the victim may bring a civil suit against the rapist to obtain private compensation.

Civil litigation can be expensive and time consuming (Lake, 2011). This process can start with a formal or an informal complaint, which can be in the form of an aggrieved party submitting a formal demand or intent to sue letter (Lake, 2011). If not settled, this can lead to initiating civil action in a court of law through a complaint (Lake, 2011). After the complaint is filed, the discovery process begins, during which facts are developed and pretrial motions are discussed and executed (Lake, 2011). This can lead to summary judgment, which serves as a way to filter cases before they proceed to trial (Lake, 2011). Since most civil cases settle or resolve at this stage, they rarely proceed to the next stage, trial (Lake, 2011). A judge, a jury, or a combination of both, can make a determination during a trial (Lake, 2011). Rare cases may continue onto appeals and then post-litigation management.

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) is a less formal alternative to the litigation process which parties may consent to in order to avoid the rigidity, time, and expense of, typically, civil litigation. ADR can be presented in three forms: negotiation, mediation, and arbitration (Lake, 2011). During negotiation, parties can negotiate with each other and reach settlement (Lake, 2011). Often, a trained mediator is mutually chosen to facilitate a mediation session and help the parties arrive at a decision (Lake, 2011). The last form of ADR is arbitration, which includes one to three arbitrators with expertise on a particular field (Lake, 2011).

The criminal justice system has traditionally focused on the offender of these laws and

punishment, which is also referred to as retributive justice (Fattah, 2004). A criticism of the legal system is that the criminal justice system focuses on its power instead of securing just and equitable outcomes (McLaughlin, Fergusson, Hughes, & Westmarland, 2003). Although higher education student conduct systems have been structured in similar ways to our legal system in terms of claiming jurisdiction, defining prescribed conduct, and outlining possible consequences (Martin & Janosik, 2004), they differ from the legal system in their philosophy, structure, process, and outcomes. In simple terms, our criminal justice system is formal and rigid, while student conduct systems are flexible and informal. In an effort to avoid confusion by continuing to describe a system that is not the focus of this study, other descriptors of our criminal justice system have intentionally been excluded.

Higher Education Student Conduct Systems

Higher education student conduct systems are structured differently than how they originated. They were quite different two hundred years ago since, “in the early days of higher education, the president of the college and the faculty tutors acted ‘*in loco parentis*,’ or ‘in place of a parent,’ as fashioned by British common law” (Lancaster & Waryold, 2008, p. 9). The first example of student conduct administration is from Harvard University in 1718 (Rudolph, 1990). In those early days of student conduct, “a bad boy was made to kneel at the feet of his tutor, who proceeded to smack him sharply on the ear” (Rudolph, 1990, p. 27) as a punishment, which highlights the difference from the current student conduct administration process. In the 1800s, small, religious colleges used student discipline as a way to reinforce religious teachings (Dannells, 1997). Later, in the 1950s and 1960s, “student discipline was seen as a necessary condition to maintain an orderly institution and to provide some predictability for day to day interactions” (Dannells, 1997, p. 12). The current student conduct administration structure and

philosophy evolved as a result of need and continues to change in response to changing student needs and other contextual issues (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008).

Philosophy

An educational philosophy guides student conduct administration, not a legal one (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008). However, this philosophy has not always existed in this manner. The relationship between an institution and a student has evolved from a caretaker to a contractual one, where students are stakeholders in the education process (Dannells, 1997). In addition, Loschiavo and Waller (2015) stated, “Campus conduct process are not courts of law or legal institutions, nor do they have the same authority to act as the legal system or desire to replace the criminal justice system” (p. 2). The educational philosophy has evolved and resulted in a more clearly defined and professional direction (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008). This evolution has allowed student conduct administration to become an important part of higher education given its primary purpose; to promote student growth and development while protecting campus community interests (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008).

However, fulfilling this philosophy has become complicated and challenging given that “at no point in human history has law exerted a larger influence over higher education and student affairs administration” (Lake, 2011, p. 1). This influence has been experienced through laws and mandates such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Title IX, the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Therefore, higher education student conduct administration has developed into a detail-oriented profession where the student conduct process has to be carefully administered and managed, with an aim of producing a climate of

learning (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008). This student-centered and educational philosophy has permeated various parts of the higher education student conduct system such as its administrators, its codes of conduct, its processes, and its sanctions.

The Student Conduct Administrator

With student learning and development at the forefront, student conduct administrators greatly differ from judges within trial and appellate courts in the state and federal legal systems as described by Lake (2011). In contrast, most college disciplinary systems have an educational aim along with a fair penalty, when applicable, as parts of the educational process, which are overseen by student conduct administrators (Pavela, 2008). Specifically, the goal of these student conduct administrators was to be transformative in their work by helping students develop metamorphic learning skills for themselves and the world in which they live (Lopez-Phillips & Trageser, 2008). Contemporary student conduct officers see students as an extension of their practice (Lancaster, 2012). In order for student conduct administrators to be effective in their practice, they have to work on creating safe environments that encourage students to recognize and confront issues that challenge their life and jeopardize their academic success (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008).

Judicial affairs officers, also known as student conduct administrators, believed that sanctions and discipline should provide opportunities for behavioral change and moral growth and development (Bostic & Gonzalez, 1999). As a way of providing these opportunities, Waryold and Lancaster (2008) asserted, “Conduct administrators need thick skin and great courage . . . (p. 7).” However, one of their challenges is the difficulty for judicial affairs officers to state their effectiveness in adjudicating cases without evaluation data (Fitch & Murray, 2001), further justifying this study. Fitch and Murray (2001) provided a solution to this challenge for

student conduct administrators by asserting that students who are found responsible for violations of their institution's code of conduct can share valuable perspectives; once again further supporting the need for this study.

Codes of Conduct

Codes of conduct prescribe the policies at an institution and the procedures that the institution will follow when there are allegations of violations of these codes, not violations of the law. The criminal justice systems prosecutes individuals based on violations of law and the interpretation of laws. Therefore, legal procedures related to prosecution often requires the expertise of lawyers as the accused and victims navigate the system, takes longer, and may be expensive. On the other hand, student conduct systems are more expedited, focus on student conduct, and ideally should be more easily comprehended and navigated by lay people, specifically, students. However, over time, institutions of higher education have developed specific codes of conduct along with a student conduct process that are similar to the American court system (Martin & Janosik, 2004). These similarities were brought on by a change in relationships between students and the institutions and legal challenges institutions faced (Martin & Janosik, 2004), which are discussed in the next section. These early codes of conduct were meant to protect the institutions constitutionally and provide specificity, which were also required by the courts (Martin & Janosik, 2004). As part of the evolution of these codes of conduct, legal terminology was removed from most of these codes of conduct, as results of rising tensions between students, parents, administrators, and the legal system (Martin & Janosik, 2004).

Typically, institutions developed these codes of conduct so that the disciplinary process could be educational and prevent the students from misbehaving (Martin & Janosik, 2004). This

differs from the punitive and retributive justice philosophies of the criminal justice system described previously. For some institutions, these codes of conduct reflected the institution's attitudes and assumptions about students, the institution's relationship with the students, and the roles institutions have in the development of students (Lau, 2004). This reflection is sometimes represented in the way institutions involve students in the student conduct process, the language used in codes of conduct, and the types of sanctions imposed. Generally, codes of conduct include the procedures that will be followed when a student is alleged to have violated the codes of conduct (Dannells, 1997). These codes of conduct surpass preventing student misbehavior since they also aim to "prevent exploitation of and harm to students, promote an atmosphere conducive to learning...nurture a sense of mutual responsibility and moral community in students...promote institutional values, [and] for legal reasons to reduce litigation" (Lau, 2004, pp. 552-553). However, Dannells (1997) disagreed and stated, "...Today's codes of conduct tend to be heavy on process and light on real guidance for the student" (p. 7).

Depending on the situation, not abiding by these codes of conduct can be seen as a violation of moral and ethical expectations (Hollinger & Lanza-Kaduce, 2009), result in a disciplinary suspension, or perhaps, both. Overall, codes of conduct strive to place student development at the forefront as opposed to an adversarial environment where the educational focus is frequently lacking (Stoner & Lowery, 2004).

Due Process

While the criminal justice system can be perceived as adversarial, busy, urgent, and demanding (Lake, 2009; Lake, 2011), its cornerstone is due process. The criminal justice system is a formal adversarial system with rigid procedures intended to ensure fairness. The expertise of lawyers is necessary to navigate through the complex justice system. On the other hand, for the

most part, higher education student conduct systems strive to be less formal and to offer a forum for students to participate without lawyers. Student conduct systems may also be perceived as adversarial since they involve a student that has been accused of doing something and discipline is at stake. In many ways, both processes share similar goals such as: uncover the truth, deter people from engaging in bad actions, assign appropriate punishment or discipline, make a victim feel that justice was achieved, and promote betterment of individuals. Both represent societal and institutional interests, respectively.

One of the most important cases involving due process within higher education student conduct systems took place in 1961, when several students were expelled without an explanation from Alabama State College for Negroes, now Alabama State University, for participating in civil rights demonstrations (Lowery, 2008). Through *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* in 1961, a lawsuit that ensued and due process in higher education was born. However, it is important to note that there is no federal law requiring a specific amount of due process at public institutions (Lake, 2011). Lake (2011) explained the following regarding due process in educational settings:

For a person to have due process rights, state action must deprive him or her of life, liberty or property . . . Colleges do not take “life.” However, property or liberty interests could be at stake in higher education. K-12 education presents a much easier avenue of analysis, because states guarantee the right to a basic K-12 education as a significant property right. However, there is no such right to higher education. (p. 182)

Since a person does not have a right to higher education, removal from an institution does not deprive the individual from “life,” “liberty,” or “property,” further inferring that the person does not have due process rights within higher education. Although this could be understood, as stated

above, students are provided with a fair and due process within student conduct in higher education.

The U.S. Supreme Court has not determined the actual amount of process due to students in disciplinary proceedings within higher education (Saurack, 1995). Even though this is the case, the law views codes of conduct through the lens of contract theory (Dannells, 1997), meaning that a code of conduct is a contract between the student and the institution, specifying the type of behavior that is not allowed, and the process that will be followed if misconduct occurs.

Additionally, higher education student conduct systems are expected to provide students with due process, which is largely as a result of the case law briefly stated above. The direct impacts to student conduct administration includes: sending a notice or charge letter, and outlining specific charges to students when they are being charged for a specific violation (Peck, 2005). Furthermore, students need to be afforded the opportunity to a fair and impartial hearing as part of a higher education student conduct process (Peck, 2005). Mullane, (2005) concluded that most students that experience a conduct process believe that the process is fair and educational, which validated the educational philosophy of higher education systems through this process. Also, most student conduct cases seemingly result in student learning and behavioral change (Howell, 2005). These positive perceptions of the student conduct process may be attributed to how decisions were made and what sanctions were imposed, which are also a part of higher education student conduct's educational philosophy.

Decisions and Sanctions

A large difference between higher education student conduct systems and our criminal justice system lies in the standard of proof that is used to make decisions. As measures of guilt or

responsibility for an offense, legal systems use beyond a reasonable doubt, which means at least a 95% confidence rate that the accused is guilty of violating a law. Meanwhile, a preponderance of evidence, at least a 50.1% confidence rate that a student is responsible for violating an institution's code of conduct, is recommended within higher education student conduct systems. Loschiavo and Waller (2015) stated it is the only standard that reflects the integrity of equitable student conduct processes, rooted in respect and fairness towards students.

Codes of conduct include possible sanctions that may be imposed if a violation is determined (Dannells, 1997). As part of college student conduct work, typical sanctions imposed by student conduct administrators include: oral and written fines, suspension, and expulsion (Lake, 2010). Specifically, scholars defined the term suspension as “a separation of the student from the college or university for a definite period of time, after which the student is eligible to return” (Stoner & Lowery, 2004, p. 55). This “separation” could be as a result of a student's academic performance or discipline-related behaviors.

Academic Suspensions

An academic suspension is based on academic performance and involves a student failing to maintain a specific grade point average (Goldman, Blackwell, & Beach, 2003). Continued poor academic standing results in a suspension (Goldman et al., 2003). Although academic suspensions differ from disciplinary suspensions, one study focused on them. Goldman et al.'s study (2003) analyzed a mid-size public research university and found that 10% of students were academically suspended and only 31.6% of those students returned to the university. Of those 31.6% of students who returned, only 19.5% graduated (Goldman et al., 2003). In Goldman et al.'s study (2003), black males represented the highest percentage of those who returned following a suspension. Finally, “although there were no significant differences in graduation

rates by percentage for the four groups who returned after suspension, a greater percentage of black females graduated than did either of the other three groups” (Goldman et al., 2003, p. 111). These types of suspensions are different than disciplinary suspensions, which are based on specific violations of an institution’s code of conduct.

Disciplinary Suspensions

Disciplinary suspensions are often assigned as sanctions for serious violations of codes of conduct and repeated violations of rules. In Janosik’s (1995) study, “students, faculty, and administrators indicated widespread support for suspending or expelling students found [responsible] of selling drugs, frequent drug use, grand larceny, assault resulting in serious injuries, and assault resulting in minor injuries” (p. 141). That same study found that faculty, administrators, and students view suspension as appropriate for students who were responsible for drug use and sale, grand larceny, and assault resulting in injury, to name a few examples (Janosik, 1995).

There are common characteristics and traits for college students who are suspended and then choose to reenroll. Stimpson and Janosik’s study (2007) found that students who reenroll after a disciplinary suspension, have a higher grade point average (GPA) than those who do not reenroll, are not charged with minor conduct violations, and men are three times more likely to reenroll than women. They also found that sophomores were more likely to be involved in conduct cases that lead to suspensions (Stimpson & Janosik, 2007).

Sexual misconduct.

There is an increase in suspensions due to sexual misconduct cases, but not much is known about what will happen when students want to reenroll (McCarty, 2015). One way of supporting this student population is engaging in Circles of Support and Accountability, which

are used in reintegration into the community from prison (McCarthy, 2015). According to McCarthy (2015), these could “translate into a similar approach of working with students who want to return to college campuses after they’ve sexual misconduct that falls into a lower level of risk and severity” (McCarthy, 2015, p. 6).

As mentioned earlier, most of the literature on the student suspension experience is on the K-12 system. Consequently, it is important to analyze the related literature for parallels and contrasts.

Suspensions in K-12

Even though there is an evident lack of research regarding suspensions within higher education, suspensions have been widely studied in the K-12 realm. In the K-12 system, suspensions are defined as “Prolonged suspensions are temporary interruptions of school services lasting five or more days, but less than the remainder of the school year” (Bekkerman & Gilpin, 2016, p. 5), which illustrates a different time frame than disciplinary suspensions in higher education. Within this sector, it is understood that suspension should be used as a last resort (Robinett, 2012). This is the case, especially in California, since it’s Education Code (state law) provides other alternatives to suspensions (Robinett, 2012).

Bekkerman and Gilpin (2016) determined that “Schools’ disciplinary decisions can significantly impact students’ educational opportunities, especially cases when students are removed from familiar learning environments for extended periods of time” (p. 1). For example, “Grade 7 school suspension was associated with higher rates of nonviolent antisocial behavior and suspension 24 months later” (Hemphill et al., 2012). Moreover, results from Sullivan, Klingbeil, and Van Norman’s study (2013) indicated that gender, race, disability, and socio-economic status were significantly related to higher suspension risk. However, school variables

reflecting school-level demographics, performance, and teacher characteristics were not related to suspension risk (Sullivan, Klingbeil, & Van Norman, 2013). The following sections provide other studies related to K-12 disciplinary suspensions.

Language

Language within higher education suspensions has not been researched, yet in K-12 settings, a couple of observations on language issues related to suspensions have been made. For example, in Burke's (2015) study, of high school English learners, students were suspended or expelled at a similar rate as non-English learner students in elementary school. However, the opposite was true in middle school and high school (Burke, 2015). Also, on average, English learner students were suspended for a greater number of days as compared to non-English learners in elementary school, middle school, and high school (Burke, 2015).

Race

Race has not been analyzed within higher education student conduct. However, relationships have also been observed in K-12 between race and student suspensions. Schools with more White students are more likely to use prolonged suspensions, instead of schools that have more students of color, which use more expulsions, or permanent removals (Bekkerman & Gilpin, 2016). For example:

Schools with over 25% of their student body being Black, either permanent removal or prolonged suspension is used in 93% and 90.1% of cases involving the use of a firearm and non-firearm weapon, while only 88.0% and 84.1% of students committing the same offense received one of these punishments in schools with a higher concentration of white students. (Bekkerman & Gilpin, 2016, pp. 6-7)

Suspensions, including expulsions, are used more frequently in schools with higher proportions of Black or Hispanic students (Bekkerman & Gilpin, 2016). Specifically, African American students are more likely than White students to be suspended or expelled (Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006; Losen, 2011). Students' other identities also intersect when student conduct is taken into consideration since scholars found that there are "disproportionate suspension rates among black and Hispanic students and students with disabilities" (Seager, Madura, Cox, & Carey, 2015). Moreno and Segura-Herrera (2014) found that Latino students are over-represented participants within conduct processes.

Gender

In the K-12 arena, the student suspension seems to also be influenced by a student's gender. Specifically, male students of all racial and ethnic groups are more likely to receive disciplinary sanctions than their female classmates (Bain & MacPherson, 1990; Cooley, 1995; Gregory et al., 1996, 2010; KewelRamani et al., 2007; Shaw & Braden, 1990). This is likely relevant within specific communities of color since, in a 2004 study, more Asian Pacific Islander males were suspended than Asian Pacific Islander females (KewelRamani et al., 2007).

Alternatives to K-12 suspension

The K-12 system believes in alternatives to suspension. Morris and Perry (2016) stated that sanctions such as suspensions hinder students' academic growth and perpetuate racial disparities in academic achievement. Therefore, Skiba et al. (2014) suggested that schools working to eliminate these types of disparities should focus on alternative types of sanctions. Two suggestions were to: 1) provide in-school suspensions, and 2) use restorative justice practices (Anyon et al., 2014).

The K-12 Suspension Experience

Many aspects of the student suspension experience in the K-12 system have been analyzed (Anyon et al., 2014; Bekkerman & Gilpin, 2016; Moreno & Segura-Herrera, 2014; Roobinett, 2012; Seider, Gilbert, Novick, & Gomez, 2013; Vanderhaar, Munoz, & Petrosko, 2015). Australian researchers studied daylong suspensions and how students experienced them. This approximates studying the higher education disciplinary suspension experience. However, it is important to acknowledge that the suspension differs from one day in K-12 to several terms or semesters in higher education settings. Furthermore, the age and cognitive development of students in K-12 are lower than students in higher education.

While suspended, a small percentage of suspended students received adult supervision while suspended and most participated in benign leisure activities such as watching television or hanging out, either alone or with their peers (Quin & Hemphill, 2014). In addition, Quin and Hemphill (2014) found that students reported diminished teacher assistance upon returning to school and suspension did not assist in the resolution of the issues that lead to the student being suspended. These results yielded some interesting conclusions regarding K-12 suspensions including: minimal benefits from suspension, and it “removes the potential pro-social normative influences of school and provides an opportunity to establish antisocial peer networks” (Quin & Hemphill, 2014, p. 52). Although still unanswered, Denice, Gross, and Rausch (2015) at least raised the question regarding how schools help students “come back” from a suspension.

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is a recent practice within higher education student conduct, but its roots date back to thousands of years and has been a part of Western and non-Western traditions (Strickland, 2004). Restorative justice practitioners have recognized that the Western legal

system practices have several limitations, which include: perceptions that harsh sentencing do not reduce recidivism rates, and punitive criminal laws do not adequately address harm (Strickland, 2004). Both of these limitations have resulted in a recent interest in restorative justice within criminal justice (Strickland, 2004).

Growth and Success

Many restorative justice advocates believe that ideas of how to handle crime and violence are outdated and trivial given their ineffective outcomes (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001). Even though politicians might be perceived as lenient for engaging in restorative justice practices, parents and voters are more supportive of restorative justice practices than politicians assume they are (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001). Restorative justice also challenged traditional notions of law and order since it challenged the capacity of legal state institutions to handle crime effectively (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001). Initial successes produced increased support from satisfied participants (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001).

Restorative Justice Definitions and Values

Restorative justice, as a philosophy, has been infused in modern higher education student conduct systems. Various definitions for restorative justice exist (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001; Strickland, 2004; Van Ness, 2002; Zehr & Mika, 2003). At the core, restorative justice is composed of a process and a set of values (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001). In terms of process, restorative justice brings together all stakeholders affected by some harm to discuss how they were affected by the harm and come to an agreement on how harm will be repaired (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001). As an example, this may involve a conversation circle which would include a student that stole a book from the bookstore, the Manager of the bookstore, the Police Officer that apprehended the student, and the student conduct administrator, all with the intent of

identifying the harm that was done and how to repair it. The values of restorative justice distinguish it from traditional punitive state justice (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001). Specifically, restorative justice focuses on healing, instead of the hurt (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001).

Van Ness (2002) stated that restorative justice has four values: encounter, amends, reintegration, and inclusion. The restorative justice process aims to foster awareness, avoid scolding or lecturing, involve offenders actively, accept ambiguity, separate deed from the doer, and see every instance of wrong-doing and conflict as an opportunity for learning (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001).

Restorative Justice in Educational Settings

Karp (2004) stated that the model student code outlined a retributive rubric, focused on punishment, and instead advocated for restorative justice philosophies to be used in higher education student conduct practices. As a result, practitioners' use of restorative justice practices modified modern higher education student conduct practices to be more community-centered. Restorative justice provides an opportunity for reflection on philosophies and practices of behavior management and allows student conduct administrators opportunities to discuss notions of compliance and justice (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001). Within the school setting, misconduct is viewed as against people, relationships in the school, and the wider school community (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001). Restorative justice provides opportunities for community participation such as a discussion on how the harm can be repaired and the actual reparation itself (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001). Restorative justice also provides an exploration of how the life chances of students and their families can be transformed in order to minimize chances of future harm (Strang & Braithwaite, 2001).

Restorative justice can be applied to higher education student conduct where misconduct

is not always illegal, but often is a violation of campus honor codes and college policies (Karp, 2004). Restorative processes can provide relevance to institutional policies by providing due process and seeking consensus around policies and equitable responses to misconduct (Karp, 2004), as shared in the example in the previous section. The benefit for students and the higher education student conduct philosophy is great since restorative justice practices have an exponential impact on student learning than traditional hearings (Karp & Sacks, 2014). According to Karp (2004), restorative justice “offers a communitarian alternative to liberal avoidance and conservative crackdowns” (p. 7). It is an approach that focuses on moral education by integrating academic learning, student participation in the campus judicial process, and restorative justice principles. This approach is an appropriate response to both individual misbehavior and campus disputes (Karp, 2004). However, restorative justice also recognizes that dismissals and suspensions are sometimes necessary within student conduct administration (Karp & Sacks, 2014).

Suspensions and other sanctions within restorative justice.

As sanctions are analyzed through a restorative justice lens, Karp (2004) stated that the burden of responsibility should be shifted from the institution to the student. Even though suspensions must be enforced, suspensions are perceived as “anticommunitarian devices that should be minimized whenever possible” (Karp, 2004, p. 9). Since a suspension is likely to result in the displacement of an issue to a less fortified community without resolving it, a suspension should be limited to students posing a threat to campus safety or when a student fails to participate in the student conduct process or complete a sanction (Karp, 2004). Restorative justice practices result in separation, otherwise known as suspension, when it is mutually agreed upon, and can also result in permanent separation, otherwise known as expulsion (Koss, Wilgus,

& Williamsen, 2014).

Other restorative justice models.

Restorative justice presents several alternatives to traditional student conduct hearings. One of these alternatives is restorative conferencing, in which student responsibility is defined as restoration and gives victims of misconduct a clear voice in the restorative process (Karp, 2004). A different option is student conduct boards, in which students serve as members on a peer-review board that promotes: trust, emotional expression, and community building (Karp, 2004). The origins of restorative justice are in international relations and peace studies, alternative dispute resolution and organizational development and management science (McEvoy & Newburn, 2003). Nevertheless, peer mediation is growing in schools, especially for the following types of cases: bullying, disobedience, and fighting (Blad, 2006). Mediation, rooted in restorative justice, has been defined as conciliatory interventions used to resolve a dispute, and remains another alternative approach (Karp, 2004).

Confines of Restorative Justice

While there are many benefits to the student and the community, the ideas proposed by restorative justice have a few weaknesses. Some of its shortcomings include: being applied in an unsystematic way, serving only a small number of minorities, serving a small number of first-time offenders, working against competing agencies with different values such as the criminal justice system, poor planning, and having short-sighted evaluations (Wietekamp, 2002). Furthermore, people applying restorative justice practitioners have yet to determine how to work through an imbalance of power between participants in terms of race and gender (Cunneen, 2003).

Shortcomings and Limitations of Student Conduct Research

Several areas for improvement in student conduct administration have been identified in existing research. A student's race and color are still significant factors in his or her school experiences, opportunities, and academic success (Bireda, 2002, p. 3). Therefore, the impact of racial bias on discipline actions (Bireda, 2002) needs to be recognized, assessed, and taken into account. Additionally, there is a need to account for cross-cultural differences and socio-economic status in education and awareness of personal biases and stereotypes (Bireda 2002; Reyes, 2006), which also includes student conduct administrators. Lake (2011) offered a possible solution by stating that through social justice efforts, educators can reconcile inequities and injustices within our society. Additionally, as demonstrated in this chapter, student conduct research needs to also improve in its analytics and information sharing and processing related to campus safety. Finally, student conduct research will also be influenced by fluctuating political climates.

Other Studies on Students Who Reenroll

Scholars have studied other, more general, aspects of students who reenroll. Schatzel, Callahan and Davis (2013) concluded that students who intend to reenroll in college are more likely to be minorities, younger, single, and recently laid-off. They also tended to have earned more credits, and hold strong beliefs about the value of education (Schatzel, Callahan & Davis, 2013). Fusch (2010) identified barriers to reenrolling for students which included competing obligations, lack of familiarity with new campus processes, and financial holds on registration. Therefore, institutions are implementing processes assist with the re-enrollment of stop-outs such as one-stop shops, extended business hours, flexibility on financial holds, and transcript evaluations (Fusch, 2010).

Conclusion

Higher education student conduct systems are different from the criminal justice system since they contrast in philosophy and practice. For example, their educational philosophy reinforces that they are not a court of law. Additionally, their philosophy is translated into an institution's codes of conduct, which dictates behavior that is good cause for discipline.

Institutions must also provide a student with a fair and due process when determining if a violation of the code of conduct occurred. This process is executed by student conduct administrators, who place learning and development at the forefront when enforcing an institution's code of conduct through specific procedures. One possible consequence is a disciplinary suspension, which can be issued as a result of a student conduct process for a violation of an institution's code of conduct. Although this process may seem like it is supported by extensive research, it is not. Instead, this process is supported by case law, federal and state mandates, and history. Unfortunately, higher education studies have not emulated the K-12 arena, which has extensive research on student suspension and has analyzed the intersections of language, gender, race, and alternatives to suspension.

As higher education student conduct practices continue migrating towards more inclusive and educational practices, restorative justice has been adopted, which focuses on repairing the harm. Even as an educational focus continues to rise, college students that are suspended for disciplinary reasons are not likely to reenroll. The next chapter will outline how I conducted my research on the college student disciplinary suspension experience.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

When I thought about what method would be ideal to analyze my data, the following questions came to mind: Does a student's suspension experience depend on the moral stage they are in at the time of suspension? Is there a link between students' moral development and their suspension experience? How do disciplinary suspensions create dissonance? As I tried to answer these questions, various theories that explain moral, social, identity, and ethical development emerged as potential options. However, these questions assume that development and dissonance are a product of a disciplinary suspension for college students, which is not always the case. Therefore, these questions and theories do not lend themselves for the exploratory nature and sense of wonder that a phenomenological approach requires. This chapter explains how I conducted my study and examines the ideal theoretical frameworks for my study, informed by their symbiotic relationship with my chosen research approach.

Research Approach

A description of qualitative research is essential in addressing phenomenology since I analyzed the student suspension experience using a phenomenological exploratory qualitative study. Qualitative research has genres, elements, and styles, which include methodologies such as grounded theory, phenomenology, and ethnography (Saldaña, 2015). Additionally, qualitative research is, "a potentially powerful way of making sense of education practitioners' (and learners') sense-making, and can lead to startling new insights into the uniquely complex processes of learning, teaching and educational managing and leading" (Van del Mescht, 2004, p. 1). Therefore, qualitative research presented itself as extremely relevant towards my topic as I made sense of the student suspension experience.

Qualitative research design involves procedures for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data to answer research questions by exploring participants' views (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2014). I intended to capture voices, which can be achieved through a qualitative approach, and would not be captured through a quantitative approach. Furthermore, qualitative research employs a lens that might be composed of particular methodologies such as phenomenological, feminist, arts-based, ethnographic, sociological, psychological, or anthropological (Saldaña, 2015). Phenomenology was an appropriate approach for my topic and will be discussed below.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology has been widely used by researchers and involves the description of lived experiences, including the essences of experiential states and personally significant meanings of concepts (Saldaña, 2015; Van del Mescht, 2004; van Manen, 1990).

Phenomenology aims to achieve this description by exploring the core of a singular human experience and fully describing what was experienced and how it was experienced (Barker & Mamiseishvili, 2014). This process allows the researcher to describe the phenomenon or story through the participants' lens and not the researcher's lens (van Manen, 2014). According to van Manen (2014):

Phenomenology is primarily a philosophic method for questioning, not a method for answering or discovering or drawing determinate conclusions. But in this questioning there exist the possibilities and potentialities for experiencing openings, understandings, insights . . . giving us glances of the meaning of phenomena and events in their singularity. (p. 29)

A phenomenological approach allowed this study to explore and describe the core, lived experiences of students who reenrolled in their campus after serving a disciplinary suspension,

through their own perspectives. This study highlighted how students transitioned into a suspension, what their lives were like during the suspension, and why they reenrolled.

Previous phenomenological studies.

Phenomenological approaches have allowed many researchers to provide a greater understanding of various student experiences. Some of these results are highlighted below. Van der Mescht (2004) was able to discuss the issue of using a phenomenological approach in the study of educational leadership. Van der Mescht (2004) used this approach in order to study educational leadership within educational leaders in respect to what it means to be a leader. Similarly, Urban, Orbe, Tavares, and Alvares (2010), used phenomenology to explore Dominican students' lived experiences, which allowed them to hear their voices as individuals and as a group, and ultimately provide recommendations to administrators in order to enhance the international student experience.

Phenomenology also assisted in studying the experiences of student leaders of color (Arminio et al., 2000) and to explore students' experiences of transition from centralized, professional advising to decentralized, faculty-based advising (Barker & Miamiseisvili, 2014). Mayhew's (2004) study brought about "a description of spirituality as the human attempt to make sense of the self in connection to and with the external world" (p. 666). Bresciani (2003) claimed that phenomenological methodologies allowed her to better understand the students' perceptions toward diversity within their institution.

While Portnoi and Kwong (2014) focused on the notion of voice, Martin (2015) explored the lived experiences of students from low socio-economic backgrounds and Saenz, Mayo, Miller and Rodriguez (2015) examined how Latino male students at community colleges engaged with their male peers. This approach has also been used when studying race in

Littleton's (2013) study on the experiences of 16 African American students in small, predominantly White colleges.

Phenomenology and the college student suspension experience.

Using a phenomenological approach has several advantages such as achieving a greater awareness of the phenomenon of interest, gathering concrete descriptions to find commonalities, and ultimately exploring the core of the college student suspension experience. By using phenomenology, a researcher can achieve a greater awareness of the phenomenon being studied (Saldaña, 2015). Aside from expulsions, student suspensions are the most severe sanctions through the student conduct system. Even though Stimpson and Janosik's study (2007) analyzed characteristics and traits of students who were suspended and then choose to reenroll, the college student suspension experience has not been studied, analyzed, or described.

Another reason why phenomenology was adequate for my study is that phenomenology focuses on concrete descriptions of experiences and aims to reveal structures that are common to the group (Maruna & Butler, 2005). Along with the actual suspension, it is important to also understand the reenrollment experience. This raised questions as to whether or not reenrollment after a suspension is important and if student conduct administrators should want students to reenroll after a disciplinary suspension.

If an institution is adopting the philosophies of modern student conduct administration, the conduct process is meant to be developmental, including the suspension itself. This means that if a student is being suspended, the student should have the opportunity to reenroll after a specified time. Therefore, understanding the lived experiences of a student suspension and reenrollment can do more than just give voice to the experience itself. van Manen (2014) stated that "borrowing" other people's experiences "allow us, in a vicarious sort of way, to become

more experienced ourselves . . . enriched by this experience so as to be able to render the full significance of its meaning” (p. 313). Therefore, understanding the lived experience of a college student who is issued a disciplinary suspension and reenrolls upon completion of the suspension, has the potential to shape how student conduct systems’ leaders frame, verbalize, and structure disciplinary suspensions and reenrollment processes.

This phenomenological approach to the college student suspension experience can assist in understanding the “inner” part of that lived experience by analyzing a student’s ethical development using Perry’s (1968) theory on intellectual and ethical development. It can also provide an understanding of the “outer” part of the lived experience by analyzing the role of institutional responsibilities and campus environments in the student suspension experience using the Karp’s (2000) community justice model. Understanding the student suspension experience could provide greater insights as to why college students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension, while avoiding a deficit perspective on the student suspension experience. Therefore, phenomenology allowed this study to deconstruct and describe the core, lived experiences of students who have reenrolled in their campus after serving a disciplinary suspension.

Phenomenology and data collection.

According to Creswell and Maitta (2002), a researcher should collect data through interviews when using phenomenology as a research approach. Collecting data through interviews included exploration and data gathering that allowed for reflection and a richer and deeper understanding of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2014).

Maruna and Bulter (2005) claimed that even though there is no single way of conducting phenomenological research, the research should involve deep and empathetic listening and

taking seriously the participants' understandings of reality. According to Turner (2010), "Interviews provide in-depth information pertaining to participant' experiences and viewpoints of a particular topic (p. 754)," which was the basis for conducting interviews in order to gather data for this study. Perälä (2005) also stated, through interviews, a researcher can "reach areas of reality that would otherwise remain inaccessible such as people's subjective experiences and attitudes" (p. 869). Therefore, I followed tips on conducting an interview, as stated by Turner (2010). For example, as described by Maruna and Butler (2005), I placed an emphasis on using open-ended questions so that I could remain close to the phenomenon and describe the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience.

It was also necessary to construct finely tuned questions since it can be difficult for people to articulate clearly what something is or means to them (Saldaña, 2014). I created open-ended questions, which allowed the participants to contribute as much detailed information as they desired and gave me the ability to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up and gain maximum data (Turner, 2010). Ultimately ". . . the aim is to collect examples of possible human experiences in order to reflect on the meanings that may inhere in them" (van Manen, 2014, p. 313). Therefore, as part of my phenomenological approach, I designed and used intentional and meaningful open-ended interview questions to use in semi-structured interviews in order to better understand the student suspension experience.

According to Turner (2010), a pilot test is an important part of interview preparation. I conducted a pilot interview with an individual that I know and has experienced a disciplinary suspension. Open-ended questions were asked during the interview. These open-ended questions aimed at allowing the participant to express his or her experiences and perspectives (Turner, 2010). The intent was that each questions allowed me, as the researcher, to ". . . dig deep into the

experiences and/or knowledge of the participants in order to gain maximum data from the interviews” (Turner, 2010, p. 757).

I kept in mind that I must ask additional questions than my planned semi-structured interview questions since according to Turner (2010), “. . . the researcher must be prepared with follow-up questions or prompts in order to ensure that they obtain optimal responses from participants” (p. 758). Follow-up questions were asked of each participant, depending on their individual responses. As stated by van Manen (2014), the interviews were conducted in an informal setting and I aimed to quickly win the trust of the interviewee. Creating relationships of trust is critical for gathering accurate depictions of information that are used to answer research questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I shared the purpose of my research, took minimal notes, and focused on the conversation in an effort to make my participants feel comfortable and in hopes of developing trusting and comfortable relationships with them. Lastly, van Manen (2014) also suggested that the interviews should be seen as more of a conversation and encouraged them to be recorded or taped. I audio recorded interviews and those recordings were used for transcriptions. The data gathered in transcriptions was used for data analysis.

Phenomenology and data analysis.

These interviews as conversations were key to the data analysis since according to van Manen (2014), “The best materials for conducting phenomenological analysis are direct descriptions of the experience, rather than accounts about the experience” (p. 299). The data gathered was analyzed, which was also grounded in phenomenology. The analysis was complex since it involved reviewing the data to reveal essential themes and discovering how the themes or patterns reflect the essence of the phenomenon (Nelson, 1989; Saldaña, 2015). Therefore, coding, as defined by Saldaña (2016), was used.

Saldaña (2016) stated that “A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence encapsulating, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). Turner (2010) indicated that the formulation of themes or codes can vary depending on the researcher. The narrative of all the interviews was transcribed. All documents were coded by hand since Saldaña (2016) recommended that first-time or small-scale studies, such as mine, should code on hard-copy printouts first and not via a computer monitor. These codes were then transferred to an electronic document for record-keeping and analysis.

The interview transcripts were coded using descriptive code which according to (Saldaña, 2016), “summarizes the primary topic . . .” (p. 3). In-vivo code, which according to Saldaña (2016), is code that is taken directly from what the participant says, was also used in the coding process. van Manen (2014) asserted, “The appropriateness of the phenomenological question and the experiential quality of the data are two critical conditions for the possibility of proper phenomenological reflection and analysis” (van Manen, 2014, p. 297), meaning that keeping the question at the center during the coding process was essential.

Ensuring accurate coding was an important part of this study. A preliminary analysis was conducted since “coding is not a precise science, it’s primarily an interpretive act” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4). Two additional rounds of coding revisions, using the same interview transcripts, followed this. Through the codes that were generated, themes were formed. Saldaña (2016) described a theme as “an outcome of coding, categorization, and analytic reflection . . . (p. 13). The uncovering of themes aligned with the phenomenological approach since, “Thematic analysis refers to the process of recovering structures of meanings that are embodied and dramatized in human experience represented in a text” (van Manen, 2014, p. 319). It was

important to keep in mind that, “In exploring themes and insights, we can treat texts as sources of meaning at the level of the whole story; at the level of a separate paragraph; and at the level of the sentence, phrase, expression, or single word” (van Manen, 2014, p. 320). In some instances, a single text was its own theme.

Potential Challenges and Issues with Phenomenology

Even though there are many reasons why phenomenology was suitable for my research design, several issues arose. Phenomenological research is to be conducted without the researcher's own preconceptions and interferences and to see it from the participants' points of view (Maruna & Butler, 2005; Saldaña, 2015). As stated previously, given my work in student affairs, and knowledge of the student conduct system, it was necessary to acknowledge my biases and hold judgments and assumptions as I conducted the study and analyzed the data.

Critics have also stated that phenomenological work cannot be empirically verified and it is anti-scientific (Maruna & Butler, 2005). However, I felt comfortable conducting this study using phenomenology since as stated above, this approach has been used by other researchers in past similar studies, and produced credible results.

Phenomenology focuses on the how and rejects explanations of why people experience the world the way they do (Hammersley, 2004). This posed a challenge on evaluating the suspension and reenrollment experience and my research questions since one of them is focused on the “why.” I ensured that my research and interview questions were aimed at the correct frame of knowledge that I was seeking to understand. van Manen (2014) called for a realization that “experiential accounts or lived-experience descriptions are never truly identical to the prereflective lived experience descriptions themselves” (p. 313). The accounts of the participants

might not provide an accurate portrayal of the college student disciplinary suspension and reenrollment.

Another potential issue was conducting a study in student conduct. According to Dannells (1997):

It must be acknowledged that scientific research in this area has been and always will continue to be, difficult because of problems in identifying and controlling variables, in gathering data from program 'participants,' and in meeting the legal and ethical requirements for confidentiality and informed consent. (p. 96)

I addressed this concern by abiding by the necessary Institutional Review Board requirements. By using phenomenology, there was an assumption that I would be able to recruit participants for my study. There was a potential for the design to change if I was unable to recruit enough participants. If I was unable to recruit participants, I would have been unable to conduct enough semi-structured interviews in order to form themes and patterns regarding the college student suspension and reenrollment experience. Other methods of data collection such as focus groups, document analyses and observations were not selected since according to Creswell and Maitta (2002), interviews should be the primary way of collecting data, and as a result, allowed for reflection and deeper understanding of the phenomenon, as described by van Manen (2014).

Theoretical Frameworks

My topic involved analyzing why students reenroll after serving a suspension and giving voice to the college student suspension experience. I was interested in exploring how students experienced their suspension. Various theoretical frames were available to present my topic and analyze the data.

Selecting a theoretical frame for this study was important since it forms the frame or the underlying scaffolding for the study and allows the researcher to focus the inquiry, and interpret the data (Merriam, 2009). According to Plano-Clark and Creswell (2010), theory is important for research since it provides background, and allows for the selection of variables and making predictions on results. The following analysis, discusses the theoretical frames that best fit my topic and data analysis. The theoretical framework, as stated by Anfara (2008), situated my research in a scholarly conversation, provided a vernacular, and revealed its strengths and weaknesses.

Even though “no theory, or theoretical framework, provides a perfect explanation of what is being studied” (Anfara, 2008), there were many theories that can be used for this topic and analysis. Some theoretical frameworks emphasize students and student identities and development. Transition Theory, first developed by Schlossberg (1981), is one of these theories and it focuses on how students deal with transitions. Meanwhile, other theoretical frames emphasize institutional responsibilities and campus environments. The community justice model is one of these theories. It was developed by Karp and Clear (2000) and discussed four principles that outline student judicial practices and are described in a subsequent section.

Transition Theory as a Theoretical Frame of Student Development

Higher education’s mission centers on student growth and development (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). College student development theory is used widely in higher education and student affairs when developing student programs, structures and initiatives since it can inform specific programs and services and affect how student affairs professionals encourage learning, student growth in their profession (Patton et al., 2016). Specifically, college student development theory is “a body of scholarship that guides student affairs and higher education

practice” (Patton et al., 2016, p. 5). College student development theory is an important tool when working with students as it provides a “collection of theories related to college students that explain how they grow and develop holistically, with increased complexity, while enrolled in a postsecondary educational environment” (Patton et al., 2016, p. 6).

Within college student development, various theoretical frames can be highlighted in order to present why students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension, give voice to the college student suspension experience, and appropriately analyze the obtained data. The challenge is that most of these theories and models were developed using students in an actual college environment. However, by definition, the student suspension experience involves students that are not in college, given their disciplinary suspension. Additionally, this study did not measure the actual cognitive, moral, or social development within a student as a result of the disciplinary suspension. Therefore, a broader theory that allowed the disciplinary suspension experience to be analyzed from multiple perspectives was ideal.

Schlossberg’s Transition Theory

As stated in the first chapter, situating the disciplinary suspension as a transition and as a phenomenon allowed for it to be openly explored. Evans et al. (2010) explained, “College students, whether traditionally or nontraditionally aged, may face changes that can have short- and long-term effects on their lives” (p. 212). According to Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012), a transition is “any event or nonevent that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions and roles” (p. 39). By this definition, a disciplinary suspension could result in changed relationships, routines, assumptions and roles for college students and then be considered a transition. Figure 1 provides a summary of the Transition theory, which will be discussed further.

Exhibit 2.1. Schlossberg's Transition Model

Transitions: Events or non-events resulting in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and/or roles.

Meaning for the individual based on:

type: anticipated, unanticipated, non-event

context: relationship to transition and the setting

impact: alterations in daily life

The Transition Process

reactions over time

moving in, moving through, and moving out

Coping with Transitions

Influenced by ratio of assets and liabilities in regard to four sets of factors:

Situation

trigger, timing, control, role change, duration, previous experience, concurrent stress, assessment

Self

personal and demographic characteristics: socioeconomic status, gender, age, health, ethnicity/culture

psychological resources: ego development, outlook, commitment, values, spirituality and resilience

Support

types: intimate, family, friends, institutional

functions: affect, affirmation, aid, honest feedback

measurement: stable and changing supports

Strategies

3 categories: modify situation, control meaning, manage stress in aftermath

4 coping modes: information seeking, direct action, inhibition of action, intrapsychic behavior

Source: Compiled from information in Goodman, Schlossberg, and Anderson (2006).

Figure 1. Schlossberg's Transition Theory. This figure outlines the various components of the Transition theory as compiled from Goodman, Schlossberg, and Anderson (2006) by Evans et al. (2010, p. 218).

Initially, Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory was a means to analyze how humans adapt to transitions. She examined how individuals adapt to transitions and found that transitions provided opportunities for growth and development. As Schlossberg continued her work, she found that her model needed to highlight how humans respond to transitions since actual adaptation may not happen (Schlossberg, 1984). For example, an individual might work through

various obstacles during a transition, while not necessarily adapting to it. Eventually, the model developed to include a three-component process, which includes approaching transitions (identifying the transition the best process to deal with it), taking stock (situation, self, support, and strategies), and taking charge (use of new strategies) (Schlossberg, 1989). The “moving in,” “moving through,” and “moving out” phases were also introduced (Schlossberg, 1989).

Moving in was described as the initial period, which includes exploring what the transition entails. This process can be confusing, and includes a realization that it will take time to comprehend the new environment. *Moving through* includes assess choices and strategies to take charge of the new situation. Lastly, *moving out* includes a new sense of purpose being articulated even though a clear vision of new goals may not be formulated. Eventually, in 2006, Goodman, Schlossberg, and Anderson, “Noted the increasing importance of the global community, the continuing impact of technology, and the importance of understanding cultural diversity and spirituality - all in regard to supporting adults coping with transitions” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 214). Finally, it was identified that type, context, and impact needed to be analyzed in order to understand the meaning of a transition (Anderson et al., 2012). Figure 2 below demonstrates an individual in transition.

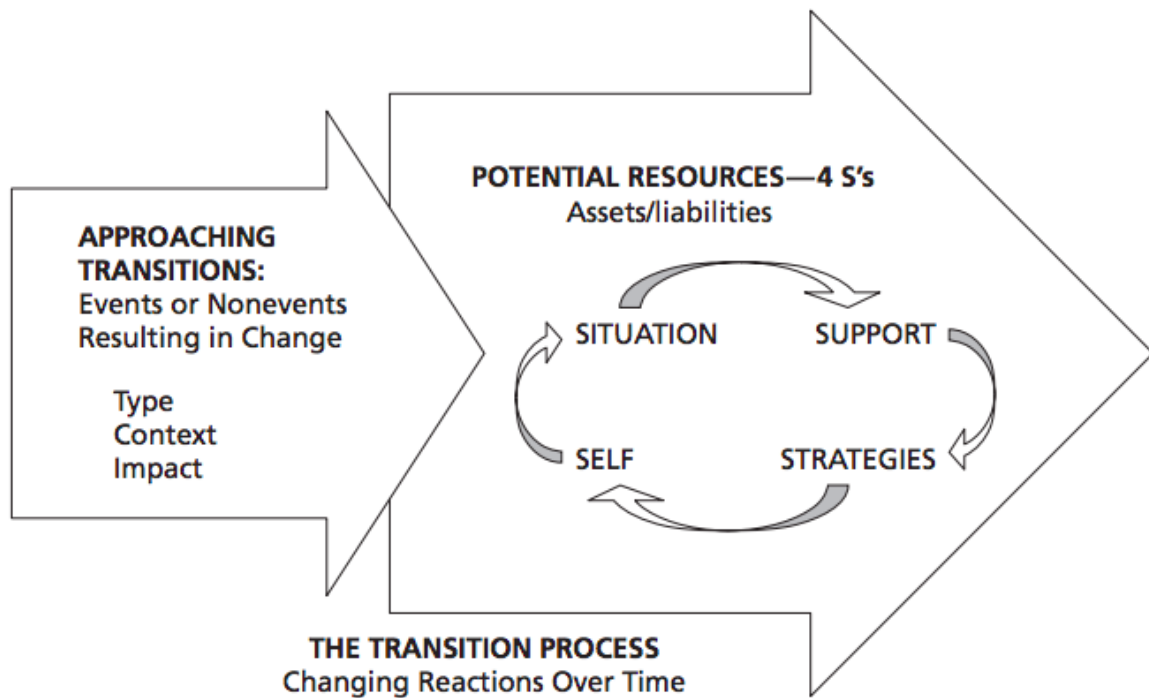


Figure 2. Elements of an individual in transition according to Anderson et al. (2012, P. 39).

Understanding transitions.

Dissecting and understating a transition was essential to this study. Three types of transitions exist: anticipated transitions (occur predictably), unanticipated transitions (not predictable or scheduled), and nonevents (expected to occur but do not) (Anderson et al., 2012). Nonevents can be: personal (related to individual aspirations), ripple (due to someone else's event), resultant (caused by an event), and delayed (anticipating an event that might still happen) (Anderson et al., 2012). A college student disciplinary suspension could be classified as an unanticipated type of transition since it is an unexpected and unscheduled event. It could be argued that a college student disciplinary suspension could be a personal nonevent type of transition since it influences an individual's personal aspirations regarding college completion. The college student disciplinary suspension could be classified as a resultant nonevent type of

transition since the disciplinary suspension is a result of the student's actions as violations of an institution's code of conduct.

Context must also be analyzed in order to understand a transition. Context refers to an individual's relationship to the transition (one's own or someone else's) and to the setting in which the transition takes place (work, personal relationships) (Anderson et al., 2012). A disciplinary suspension's context could be analyzed by dissecting a college student's relationship to the settings, such as academic setting, personal relationships, home life, and work.

In order to understand a transition, impact must also be analyzed. Impact can be defined as the degree to which a transition alters an individual's daily life, and is dependent on an individual's assets and liabilities at the time of the transition (Anderson et al., 2012). Since a disciplinary suspension removes a student from an institution for a specified amount of time, it could be determined that the student's daily life was altered and therefore, the degree of this alteration or change could be measured or determined.

During a transition, the individual moved from being focused on the transition to assimilating to the transition (Anderson et al., 2012). Evans et al., (2010) asserted, "Transitions may lead to growth, but decline is also a possible outcome, and many transitions may be viewed with ambivalence by the individuals experiencing them" (p. 216). Theoretically, a disciplinary suspension is supposed to be developmental in nature, however, this growth and development cannot be guaranteed. I anticipated that some of the participants would describe the disciplinary suspension in a negative fashion.

Coping with transitions.

The following assisted my study by providing background on how a college student may handle and navigate a disciplinary suspension. Within Transition theory, an individual's

resources in four main factors (situation, self, support, and strategies) at the time of the transition will determine an individual's ability to assess and evaluate the transition itself (Anderson et al., 2012; Evans et al., 2010). This navigation can be seen in Figure 3. The variability in resources explains "why different individuals react differently to the same type of transition and why the same person reacts differently at different times" (Schlossberg et al., 1995, p. 57). These four factors would outline the differences in disciplinary suspension experience among the college students that I interviewed. I was able to utilize these four factors as I developed my interview questions, which are discussed later in this chapter.

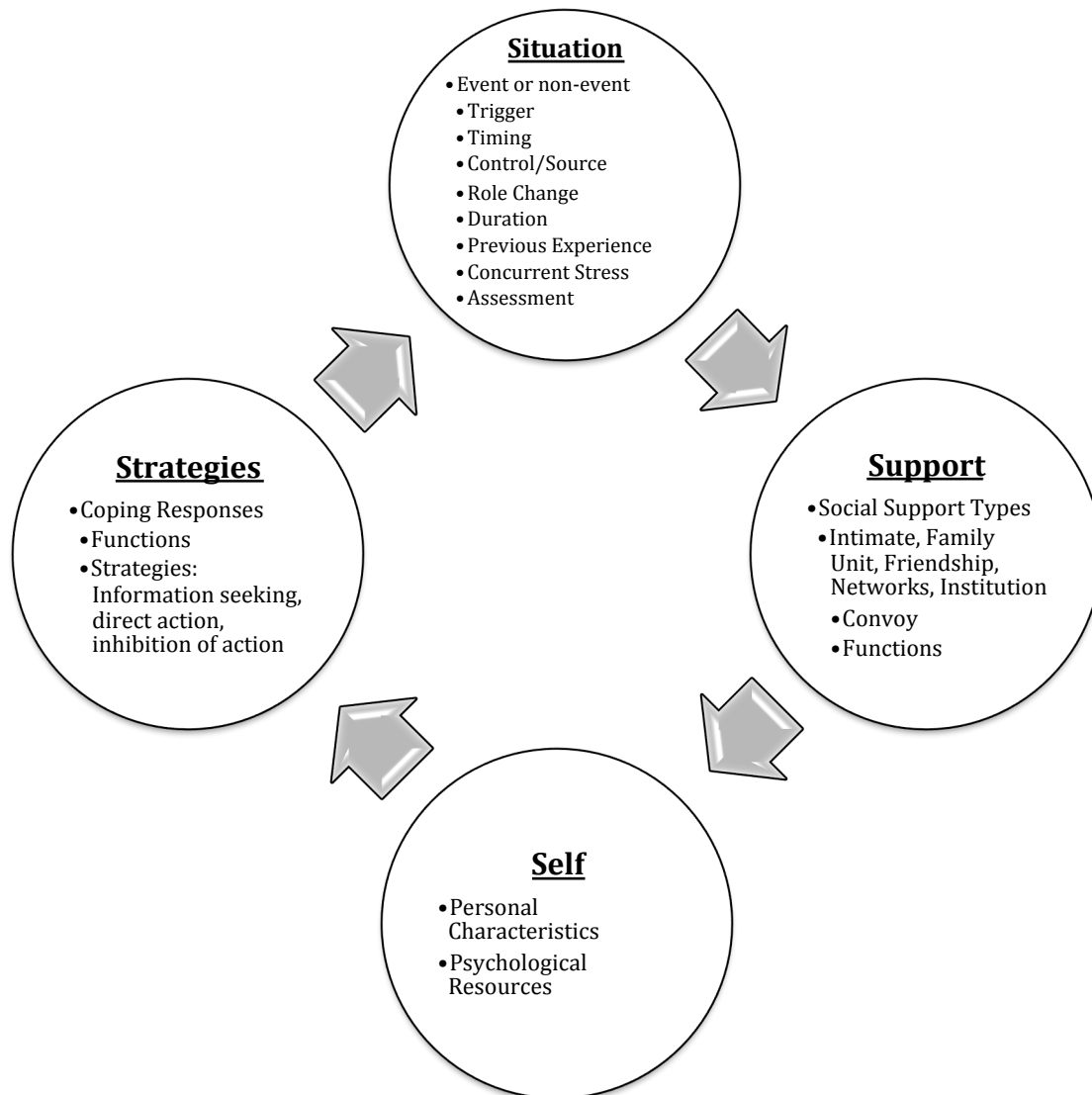


Figure 3. Coping Resources—the 4 S’s (Anderson et al., 2012, p. 62). This figure shows the four factors that influence the ability of the individual to cope during a transition.

Situation, self, support, and strategies.

The core of the college student disciplinary suspension can be unearthed using the 4 S’s. For example, Stimpson and Janosik (2007) hypothesized that family members, educational goals, commitment, and maturation might affect a student’s reenrollment decision. By utilizing the 4 S’s, this hypothesis can be further explored. During a transition, two evaluations are made: an individual’s view of the transition itself, and a self-assessment of the resources available to cope

with the transition (Anderson et al., 2012; Evans et al., 2010). In order to analyze the situation factor, the following items are considered: trigger, timing, control, role change, duration, previous experience with a similar transition, concurrent stress, and assessment. An individual's relation to the self can be classified into personal and demographic characteristics, which affects how an individual views life, such as socioeconomic status, gender, age, stage of life, state of health, and ethnicity or culture. The second way an individual's relation to the self can be classified is by its psychological resources such as development, outlook, optimism, self-efficacy, commitment and values, spirituality, and resiliency.

Support is also considered when analyzing a transition, which is in reference to social support, such as types (intimate relationships, family units, networks of friends, institutions and communities), functions of support (affect, affirmation, aid, and honest feedback), and measurement (identifying stable supports, role dependent supports, and supports that are likely to change). Strategies are also considered when analyzing a transition, which contain three categories (modify situation, control meaning, and manage stress in aftermath), and four coping models (information seeking, direct action, inhibition of action, and intrapsychic behavior). The four factors (situation, self, support, and strategies) and their descriptors informed my interview questions and analyses.

Moving out.

This stage is composed of a separation or ending, exiting a role, or disengagement from roles, relationships, routines, or assumptions. According to Anderson et al. (2012), "Moving out can be seen as ending one series of transitions and beginning to ask what comes next" (p. 57). For example, "Changing jobs, moving, and returning to school all are transitions in which adults mourn the loss of former goals, friends, and structure" (Anderson et al., 2012, p.

57). The college students in my study returned to school and their transition was examined, which also included this stage.

Anderson et al. (2012) described a psychological portfolio consisting of identity, relationships, and meaningful involvement. Identity was described as how an individual identifies, which takes time to develop (Anderson et al., 2012). Relationships were composed of adjusting to new surroundings and relationships as a result of the transition (Anderson et al., 2012). Lastly, meaningful relationships make an individual feel that he or she matters and sees his or her life as having meaning and purpose (Anderson et al., 2012).

Rationale for Transition Theory

Nancy Schlossberg's theory "provides insights into factors related to the transition, the individual and the environment that are likely to determine the degree of impact a given transition will have at a particular time" (Evans et al., 2010, p. 213). Hence, this allowed for analysis of the disciplinary suspension, the actual student, and the student's surroundings.

Schlossberg's transition theory was chosen for my study for various reasons. Even though this theory is considered an adult development theory, it is also relevant to traditionally-aged college students (Evans et al., 2010). By definition, the disciplinary suspension can be classified as a transition since, "Transitions provide opportunities for growth and development, but a positive outcome for the individual cannot be assumed" (Evans et al., 2010). The fact that growth and development are at the center of a disciplinary suspension further reinforces this. Similarly, a positive outcome, which in this case would be that a student reenrolls after his or her suspension is completed, resonates with this theory.

Transition theory lends itself to this qualitative approach since a transition can be viewed holistically by the individual that experiences it (Evans et al., 2010). This model has evolved to

“facilitate understanding and action with regard to transition . . . (and) can provide a solid foundation for practice that is responsive to both commonalities and idiosyncrasies” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 225). One example of Transition theory being successfully used has been to examine and understand the student athlete experience on college campuses (Evans et al., 2010). Additionally, other scholars have utilized transition theory to understand the student behaviors during the transition from high school to college (Evans et al., 2010). Overall, transitions, such as the college student disciplinary suspension, can be better understood and approached by using Transition theory (Evans et al., 2010).

Potential Issue

Even though this theory seemed like a fit for my study, not enough research exists in order to prove its validity. According to Evans et al. (2010), “Although the literature has demonstrated the utility of Schlossberg’s theory in practice, research studies supporting its validity are scant, particularly in higher education” (p. 225). This study might serve as a way to further validate Transition theory in general.

Overall, a transition is a process that involves moving in, moving through, and moving-out (Evans et al., 2010; Schlossberg, 1984). The moving out process was interpreted as the college student moving out of the disciplinary suspension as the reenrollment process begins. The college student disciplinary suspension experience was further analyzed by incorporating other components such as community justice.

Community Justice as a Theoretical Frame on Institutional Responsibilities and Campus Environments

Other sets of theoretical frames emphasize institutional responsibilities and campus environments and could be used as theoretical frames for analyzing the student suspension and

reenrollment experience. According to Bolman and Deal (2013), “Only in the last hundred years or so have social scientists devoted much time or attention to developing ideas about how organizations work, how they should work, or why they often fail” (p. 14). In educational systems, this has resulted in various frames and theories that serve as tools to accomplishing basic and complex goals (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Even though no single model can be a perfect representation of a system, some models reflect what usually happens in some parts of the institutions and suggest useful courses of action (Birnbaum, 1983). One course of action is that of Karp (2004), since he focused on the use of restorative justice in the campus community. Karp’s (2004) approach introduced four principles to guide the student judicial process, based on Karp and Clear’s (2000; 2002) community justice conceptual framework. This conceptual framework assisted in framing why students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension, and in giving voice to the college student suspension experience.

Community Justice

Community justice originated within the criminal justice system and it refers to all aspects of crime prevention and justice activities that explicitly include the community in their process and set the enhancement of community quality of life as a goal (Karp & Clear, 2000). Community justice is also inclusive of a range of criminal justice initiatives such as crime prevention, community policing, adjudication, and corrections (Karp & Clear, 2002). Even though community justice “is composed of loosely related, innovative projects and programs,” (Karp & Clear, 2000, p. 324) at the core, are components that share a focus on “short-and long-term problem solving, restoring victims and communities, strengthening normative standards and effectively reintegrating offenders” (Karp and Clear, 2000, p. 200).

Community justice is related to restorative justice, which will be discussed later, since it shares a “concern for victims and prioritizes the types of offender sanctioning that require restitution to victims and reparations to the community” (Karp & Clear, 2000, p. 325).

Additionally, restorative justice and community justice both reject punishment as a sanctioning philosophy, yet they differ since community justice is broader and focuses on crime prevention, offender sanctioning, and community outcomes (Karp & Clear, 2000). Karp and Clear created the community justice model (2000) based on these philosophies and structures.

The Community Justice Model

Karp and Clear’s (2000) community justice model has two domains; one is process, and the other is outcomes. The process domain has four categories: system accessibility, community involvement, reparative process, and reintegrative process. These categories are also defined as “core concerns around which programs can be designed and developed” (Karp & Clear, 2000). This is not a causal model since one category does not lead automatically to another (Karp & Clear, 2000). Karp (2004) used the community justice model (Karp & Clear, 2000) to outline four principles that outline student judicial practices. Figure 4 shows Karp and Clear’s (2000) conceptualization of the community justice model, which demonstrates the interaction between the four categories of the *process* section.

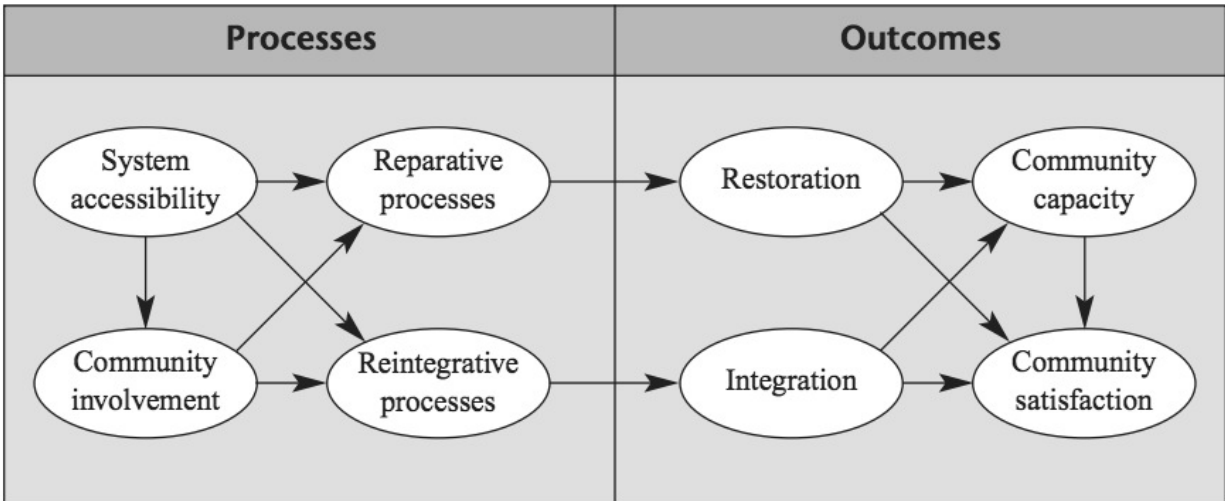


Figure 4. Karp and Clear's (2000) Community Justice Model.

The Community Justice Model as a Guide for Student Judicial Practices

Karp's (2004) four principles for student judicial practices incorporated Karp and Clear's (2000) community justice model. Although my study makes references to the terms *conduct* and *disciplinary*, Karp's (2004) model specifically names "judicial" as part of the title. The first principle, accessible, stated that the judicial system must be accessible to the student community (Karp, 2004). It also specified that students should be aware of campus policies and judicial system practices should be consistent, respectful and not bureaucratic (Karp, 2004). The second principle, community involvement, focused on active community participation. Students, employees, and the voice of the harmed party should have an active role in the process, including the individual charged with a violation as a participant in the decision-making process (Karp, 2004). The third principle stated that sanctioning should focus on repairing the harm. The offender should take steps towards repairing the harm. Karp (2004) pointed out that communal harm could also be repaired. The fourth principle, reintegrate, focused on how the reported student must assure others that he or she will not cause future harm (Karp, 2004). Given that it is a reciprocal process, the community must strive to reintegrate the individual and can do so by

providing academic tutoring, psychological counseling or other competency needs (Karp, 2004). Karp's (2004) application of the community justice model within student conduct was ideal for this topic since it referenced a direct application to the student conduct system, process, sanctions, and impacts on the individual being sanctioned.

Impact on the Topic Presentation and Data Analysis

Using Karp's (2004) application of the community justice model within student conduct as a theoretical frame for my study impacted how I presented both the topic and the data analysis. To start, this model has a focus on external factors that relates to a student's disciplinary suspension experience. Some of these external factors are the disciplinary process, the role of the student conduct officer, the role of the community, and any reintegration systems in place for a student to reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension. A portion of the data analysis focused on how the student conduct process, the institution, or student conduct officer incorporates reintegration into their suspensions, as defined by the community justice model. This analysis provided unique insights as to why students reenroll after serving a suspension through external structures, and, in turn, continued to give voice to the college student suspension experience. Again, the focus was on the "outer" factors of the student suspension experience.

Potential issues.

Even though Karp's (2004) application of the community justice model within student conduct as a theoretical framework was chosen for my study, a few issues needed to be highlighted and resolved. One of the issues was the reliability of the model within student conduct or higher education. Since community justice stems in the criminal justice system, there are several articles on its use and effectiveness. However, I was not able to find articles within

higher education, student affairs or student conduct that discusses the reliability of the model. How to assess or measure the model is yet to be deciphered. I was not able to find formal assessment models for this conceptual framework.

Finally, not all institutions use restorative justice practices. I was able to communicate with several institutions in order to reach participants. Even though those institutions use developmental philosophies within their student conduct practices, not all of them define their practices as being informed by community justice. It could be said that I should only focus on participants from institutions that use community justice as part of their student conduct process. Yet, Karp and Clear (2000) stated that community justice is not a causal model. Therefore, the concept of reintegration was analyzed within a student conduct process, specifically the student suspension process, since the preceding community justice factors do not lead directly into reintegration.

Research and Interview Questions

According to van Manen (2014), “A phenomenological question wonderingly inquires into the meaning of a possible human experience” (p. 39). With this in mind, I created research questions that possessed “heuristic clarity, point and power” (van Manen, 2014, p. 297). Turner (2010) asserted, “Creating effective research questions for the interview process is one of the most crucial components to interview design” (p. 757). With all this in mind, the following three research questions were formulated for my qualitative study:

- 1) How do college students experience disciplinary suspensions?
- 2) Why do college students choose to reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension?
- 3) How do college student experience reenrollment following a disciplinary suspension?

van Manen (2014) added, “It is important for phenomenological inquiry that the phenomenological question stays at the heart of all phases and moments of the inquiry” (van Manen, 2014, p. 299). Therefore, I ensured that these research questions were also reflected in the introduction of this study, the entire methodology, the data collection, and the data analysis.

van Manen (2014) stated, “When doing interviews, it is often helpful to elicit a specific experience” (p. 299). I created specific open-ended questions that aimed to draw out the essence of the participants’ experiences. Evans et al. (2010) already encouraged this approach, “Student affairs professionals interested in providing a structure for self-assessment for individuals experiencing transitions could easily create a worksheet by identifying each of the 4 S’s and listing under each important aspects for the individual’s reflection and discussion” (p. 223). These phenomenological interview questions were structured using Transition theory and the community justice model. The creation and order of these interview questions was achieved by framing the college student disciplinary suspension experience as a transition process while eliciting a sense of wonder and curiosity. The following interview questions responded directly to my research questions. Alongside them is a part of the theoretical framework that influenced them:

How do college students experience disciplinary suspensions? (RQ1)

Time of suspension (Moving in)

- How would you describe yourself at the time of your suspension? What were your thoughts and feelings at the time of your suspension? (Self, Situation- Timing and Role Change)
- Tell me about your disciplinary suspension. (Situation-[Trigger, Control, Duration, Timing, Role Change], Assessment, Self, Support, Strategies)

- Describe when you found out about your disciplinary suspension. (Situation, Control, Support)

During the suspension (Moving through)

- How would you describe the time during your suspension? What were your thoughts and feelings while you were suspended? Why? (Situation-Control, Self)
- What did you do while you were suspended? Why? (Strategies)
- Who or what was your support system during your suspension? Why? What did you say? (Support)

Why do college students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension? (Moving out) (RQ2)

- What were your thoughts and feelings towards reenrollment while you were suspended? (Strategies)
- Who or what was your support system during the enrollment process? (Strategies, Support) (Community Justice)
- Why did you choose to reenroll after your suspension at the same institution? (Strategies) (Community Justice)
- How would you describe the reenrollment process? (Community Justice)
- How did the disciplinary suspension affect your decision making? (Self) (Community Justice)

How do college students experience reenrollment following a disciplinary suspension? (RQ3)

(Moving out) (Reflection)

- How would you describe your suspension now? Why? (Identity, Relationships, Meaningful Involvement)
- How do you feel about the suspension and the administrators? (Relationships)

- How would you describe yourself now? (Identity, Relationships, Meaningful Involvement)
- How would you describe the suspension and reenrollment experience to someone who has never been suspended? (Identity, Relationships, Meaningful Involvement)

These interview questions produced the “detail, concreteness, vividness and lived-thoroughness” (van Manen, 2014, p. 297) necessary for a phenomenological analysis and therefore produced a study that explores the student disciplinary suspension experience and why college students choose to reenroll after a disciplinary suspension.

Study Participants

Institutional Settings

All six students were suspended from different institutions. These institutions were either public universities or community colleges from various parts of the United States. In order to protect the participants’ confidentiality, the names and the locations of the specific institutions are not stated.

Boundaries of the Study and Participants

Participants were solicited through The Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA) by following their Procedures for Requesting to Permission to Study ASCA Membership (2016). The request was submitted and approved via email. On the following dates, emails were sent to all members of ASCA, informing them of this study and requesting that they forward this study's information to any individual that meets the participant criteria: October 11, 2018; October 25, 2018; November 15, 2018.

Participants were also solicited by independently contacting a known network of Chief Student Conduct Administrators at specific institutions that include suspensions as part of their

educational disciplinary process. Approximately 100 professionals were contacted individually, via personalized emails. Participants were solicited through a known network of administrators at institutions that have Respondent Support Program, which included approximately 10 professionals and programs. These institutions and institutional conduct leaders represented convenience sampling based on my familiarity and individual contacts who could provide aid in recruitment.

Participants were also solicited via email listservs and social media (Facebook and LinkedIn) groups for professional organizations: The Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA); The National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA); The California Community College Student Affairs Association (CCCSAA). An additional source or participant solicitation was through the “plaintiff’s bar.” This was achieved by communicating with the Chair of ASCA’s Research group and provided access to study participants that was different from those that the previous association members could recommend. The approved recruitment language was sent to these listservs, social media groups, and administrators, informing the general membership of this study, and requesting that they forward this study's information, including the researcher's contact information, to any individual that met the participant criteria.

In order to protect student privacy, both of these approaches required the ASCA members or student conduct administrators to send this study’s information to potential participants (students that have reenrolled after serving a suspension) directly. The participants were college students (graduate and undergraduate). Given a foreseen small sample size, this study was open to students who were currently enrolled (at the time of the interview) after serving a suspension or had graduated from their college or university after serving a suspension. This served as

convenience sampling since there are not many individuals available, and this can be a sensitive subject for college students to talk about.

Participants had “rich experiences” (van Manen, 2014, p. 315) in this subject, the college student disciplinary suspension. In selecting participants, the following criteria was set:

- Suspended from an institution,
- Suspended while in college,
- Suspended for a disciplinary reason and not an academic reason, and
- Once the suspension was complete, the student reenrolled in at least one subsequent semester/quarter/terms at the institution they were suspended from.

I did not consider students that were suspended and reenrolled more than 20 years ago since this could have limited how many details the participant might be able to share the concrete experiential descriptions. I used pseudonyms in presenting the findings in order to protect their privacy.

The amount of examples of concrete experiential descriptions necessary for this study to explore the phenomenological meanings of the college student disciplinary suspension experience (phenomenon) is something that I carefully examined. van Manen (2014) stated that in a phenomenological approach, the researcher is not reaching for saturation. Instead, “phenomenology aims at what is singular and a singular theme or notion may only be seen once in experiential data” (van Manen, 2014, p. 353). Additionally:

Depending on the phenomenological question, the general aim should be to gather enough experientially rich accounts that make possible the figuration of powerful experiential examples or anecdotes that help to make contact with life as it is lived. In the end, the outcome of the study should contain just the right amount of experiential

material (whether in single sentence or story form) that creates a scholarly and reflective phenomenological text. (van Manen, 2014, p. 353)

Even though van Manen (2014) did not specify a number of participants, I aimed to interview 10-15 participants as recommended by Johnson and Christensen (2008). The following list outlines the common responses I received.

- No response: Most of the individual emails that I sent went unanswered.
- Phone call: Several professionals asked to have a follow-up conversation over the phone, in order to have some questions answered.
- Email clarification: A few professionals asked for some clarifications via email.
- Interested participant but no follow-up: I had four participants state that they were interested in participating. However, they did not confirm an interview time or reply to follow-up emails.
- Interested: Six individuals stated they were interested in participating and were interviewed.

The following is a list of the participants for this study, which is also provided in Figure 8:

- Laura: 4-year institution. Suspended for falsification of information
- Tony: 4-year institution. Suspended for cheating
- Jose: 2-year institution. Suspended for submitting false financial aid documents
- Gabriel: 2-year institution. Suspended for using an unauthorized parking permit
- Julio: 4-year institution. Suspended for cheating
- Cam: 4-year institution. Suspended for possession of marijuana.

In terms of the findings, “Within phenomenological methodology, the term sample should not refer to an empirical sample as a subset of a population” (van Manen, 2014, p. 352). Empirical

generalizations cannot be made through phenomenological methodologies (van Manen, 2014). Instead, van Manen (2014) suggested that the term sample be thought of as an example. A single account of a college student's disciplinary suspension should not be thought of as representative of all college students who experience a disciplinary suspension.

Quality, Credibility, and Rigor

As with many qualitative and phenomenological studies, the quality, credibility, and rigor of my study might be called into question. van Manen (2014) dispelled common beliefs regarding phenomenological research:

A common problem for phenomenological researchers is to be challenged in defending their research in terms of references that do not belong to the methodology of phenomenology. This is especially challenging when external concept of validation, such as sample size, sampling selection criteria, members' checking, and empirical generalization are applied to phenomenology. These are concepts that belong to the languages of different qualitative methodologies. Qualitative research is not well-served by validation schemes that are naively applied across various incommensurable methodologies. (p. 347)

My data needs to be valid. I achieved this since:

The validity of a phenomenological study has to be sought in the appraisal of the originality of insights and the soundness of interpretive processes demonstrated in the study. No predetermined procedure such as members' check or 'triangulation of multiple methods' can fulfill such demand for validating a phenomenological study. (van Manen, 2014, p. 348)

I focused on adequately interpreting and analyzing my data as stated above so that I could justify its validity. By following the phenomenological approach, I focused on telling the participants' stories through their lenses and not through my researcher lens. Saldaña (2015) stated, "Consider participants your coresearchers by inviting them to review, assess, and comment on your analytic findings in progress—a form of corroboration often referred to as member checking (p. 81). Consequently, I shared each transcript with the respective participant and provided the opportunity for edits and feedback. I also shared the emerging themes with the participants and solicited their feedback.

Secondly, my study can be considered as high quality. While, I asked participants if their experiential descriptions are resonant with their original experiences, as recommended by van Manen (2014), it is important to note that, "validating the quality of the experiential accounts or anecdotes does not validate the quality of the phenomenological study as a whole" (van Manen, 2014, p. 348). The thoroughness and intentionality of this study defines the quality of the study itself.

The results produced from my study are reliable. I may be asked if the results could be replicated in various settings. As a response, I would reiterate that my study involves a phenomenological approach in a qualitative study. This is important since it is unlikely that a phenomenological study would yield the same results with different measures since the same phenomenon can produce different results (van Manen, 2014). However, I shared the transcripts with the participants so that they could verify if what was transcribed was accurate, which also gave them an opportunity to expand on their insights.

Initial Proposed Coding and Themes

The following provides an outline of how I initially intended to code, organize, and present my data using Schlossberg's transition theory and Karp and Clear's (2000) community justice model as theoretical frameworks.

Time of suspension (Moving in)

- How the student describes themselves (Self)
- General description of the disciplinary suspension (Situation- Timing, Self, Support, Strategies)
- Reason for disciplinary suspension (Situation- Trigger)
- Rationale for disciplinary suspension (Situation- Trigger, Assessment)
- Individual that suspended the student (Situation- Trigger)
- Student notification of the disciplinary suspension (Situation- Duration & Assessment)
- Length of disciplinary suspension (Situation- Timing & Duration)
- Student's academic standing at the time of suspension (Situation- Timing & Role Change)
- Initial reaction to disciplinary suspension (Situation- Control)
- The student's feelings and thoughts towards the disciplinary suspension and administrators (Situation- Control)
- The student's initial actions in response to the disciplinary suspension (Support)
- The student's initial support system (Support)

During the suspension (Moving through)

- Description of disciplinary suspension during the disciplinary suspension (Situation- Control)

- The student's feelings and thoughts towards the disciplinary suspension and administrators during the disciplinary suspension (Self)
- The student's actions in response to the disciplinary suspension during the disciplinary suspension (Strategies)
- The student's general actions during the disciplinary suspension (Strategies)
- The student's support system during the disciplinary suspension (Support)

Student's reenrollment after serving a disciplinary suspension (Moving out)

- The student's feelings and thoughts towards the disciplinary suspension and administrators regarding reenrollment (Strategies)
- The student's actions in regarding reenrollment (Strategies) (Community Justice)
- The student's support system regarding reenrollment (Strategies, Support) (Community Justice)
- Student's choice to reenroll (Strategies) (Community Justice)
- Student's choice to reenroll at the same institution (Strategies) (Community Justice)
- Student's influences regarding reenrollment (Support) (Community Justice)
- Reenrollment process (Community Justice)
- Student's human influence to reenroll (Support) (Community Justice)
- Student's reflection regarding decision making as a result of the disciplinary suspension (Self) (Community Justice)
- Disclosing of disciplinary suspension (Support, Strategies) (Community Justice)

Present (Moving out) (Reflection)

- Present description of disciplinary suspension experience (Identity, Relationships, Meaningful Involvement)

- Student's present thoughts and feelings towards the disciplinary suspension and the administrators (Identity, Relationships)
- Student's current actions and student/professional status (Identity, Relationships)
- Student's description of the suspension experience to someone who has never been suspended (Identity, Relationships, Meaningful Involvement)
- Student's present thoughts on reenrolling (Identity, Relationships, Meaningful Involvement)

Limitations of the Study

A few limitations were identified in the course of this study. I was constantly aware of how I would justify interviewing participants from different types of institutions. Some students that responded had a positive experience, which I was prepared to analyze and present their experience accurately. Not all suspended students reenroll. I addressed this as a potential area of future research in Chapter 5. My current role as a student conduct officer could have impacted how participants perceived me, which might have influenced the information they shared. However, this was addressed in the way that I communicated to the participants, which included presenting myself as a researcher and not a conduct administrator.

Participants necessarily originated from administrators. Does that influence the overall findings? It could be stated that administrators would choose students that they think would be gentle or generous towards the process. There is a risk that administrators would suggest students that the administrator feels would be likely to give a favorable view of student conduct or the institution. This could include students that demonstrated little or no animosity or students that quickly accept responsibility. In order to combat this limitation, participants were also solicited from administrators outside of student conduct, as shared above.

Does the time since the suspension affect how a student self-describes their experience? A student who has recently been suspended may be more emotional than one completed the disciplinary suspension several years ago. Time may influence perspectives and their ability to remember details of their lived experiences. Nevertheless, this study does not focus on time, its influence on individual students, and their perception on lived experiences, even though it may mean limited memories of the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment.

Lastly, I was aware that whatever my findings were, they are only specific to my sample since, “Phenomenological generalizations should not be confused with empirical or quantitative generalizations that draw conclusions of validity of observation from a sample of a population to the general population” (van Manen, 2014, p. 352).

Conclusion

My study explored the college student disciplinary suspension experience, and analyzed why colleges students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension, all while giving voice to the college student suspension experience. Phenomenology brings to life lived experiences of some that are possible lived experiences of others (Arminio et al, 2000), which speaks to the importance of my study. By using phenomenology as part of my qualitative research design, I present a better understanding of the college student disciplinary suspension experience, through the students’ own lens. Phenomenology also affects the presentation of my topic, the research design and the data analysis. Even though many students do not experience suspensions, an understanding of the lived experience of those who were suspended and reenrolled is necessary.

Schlossberg’s transition theory frames the internal parts of the student suspension experience such as the student’s development. Meanwhile, using Karp’s (2004) application of the community justice model within student conduct as a theoretical frame, while focusing on the

principle of reintegration, frames the external parts of the student suspension experience such as the student conduct process and student support systems. Using both theoretical frameworks as a two-pronged approach in order to present this topic and analyze the data results in richer and more holistic results and description of the overall college student disciplinary suspension experience.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSES

The college student disciplinary suspension and reenrollment is an event resulting in change, as described by Schlossberg's transition theory (1981). In analyzing this phenomenon and lived experiences, the type, impact, and context of these transitions will be discussed in this chapter. Additionally, Karp's (2004) four principles that outline student judicial practices will be incorporated when analyzing the college students' reenrollment experience. Using both theoretical frames together allowed for an analysis of the college students' experiences on a deeper level and provided a deeper analysis considering internal and external factors that influenced these lived experiences.

Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenology was essential in this research since it involved the description of lived experiences, including the essences of experiential states and personally significant meanings of concepts (Saldaña, 2015; Van del Mescht, 2004; van Manen, 1990). In this study, these descriptions included the college student disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience. By using phenomenology, the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience will be described through the participants' lens and not my own, as recommended by van Manen (2014). This approach allowed me to explore and describe the core, lived experiences of students who have reenrolled at the same campus after serving a disciplinary suspension, through their own perspectives. The interview transcripts and my notes revealed essential themes and assisted me in discovering how the themes reflect the essence of the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience (Nelson, 1989; Saldaña, 2015). This thematic analyses allowed for the detection of meanings that are incorporated in human experiences represented in the interview transcripts and my notes (van Manen, 2014).

Theoretical Frameworks

Schlossberg's (1989) transition theory allowed the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience to be analyzed from multiple perspectives. Transition theory lent itself to this study since the college students' experiences were viewed holistically by the participants (Evans et al., 2010) and also facilitated an analysis of the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment, the individual students, and their surroundings. The college student's responses to the interview questions were analyzed using components of Schlossberg's transition theory, which included moving in, moving through, moving out, and elements of the 4 S's; Situation, Support, Self, and Strategies.

Karp and Clear's (2000) community justice model and Karp's (2004) four principles that outline student judicial practices were also used to analyze the reenrollment experience. This allowed for external factors, such as processes, to be discussed and represented as part of the college students' lived experiences.

Together, Schlossberg's (1989) transition theory and Karp and Clear's (2000) community justice model allow for a comprehensive approach and analysis of the college student disciplinary suspension experience. By using both theoretical frames together, the college students' experiences can be analyzed on a deeper level and provide a richer analysis when taking into consideration internal and external factors that influenced these experiences. Each theme is coupled with corresponding elements of both of these theoretical frames, which are explained in Chapter 3.

Disciplinary Suspensions and Reenrollments as Transitions

As described in the previous chapter, the college student disciplinary suspension experience is an unanticipated type of transition. All six participants did not predict that they

would be suspended from their institution, since they did not schedule a separation between them and the institution. In general, a suspension automatically is categorized as an unexpected type of transition given that students do not enter college planning to be suspended. The college student disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience is also classified as a transition, as stated by Patton (2016), since the six college students attached significance to the changes that occurred as a result of the disciplinary suspension. Moreover, they were forced to see it as a transition since they did not have a choice in whether or not they would be suspended.

As explained in an earlier chapter, context refers to a college student's relationship to the disciplinary suspension and the setting in which the transition takes place, which can include work and personal relationships (Anderson et al., 2012). Therefore, the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment's context is analyzed in the rest of this chapter by gathering common lived experiences among the six participants. This was achieved by closely examining the participants' relationship to the institution, their family, loved ones, friends, work, and environment.

The impact of the college student disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience is the degree to which a lived experience altered the college students' daily life, and varies on each college student's assets and liabilities at the time of the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience (Anderson et al., 2012). The disciplinary suspension removed each of these six students from their respective institution for a specified amount of time. The rest of this chapter also outlines common lived experiences among these students as they reenrolled in the institution they were suspended from.

Common lived experiences among the six participants were analyzed as the college student disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience was explored through the methods discussed in the previous chapter. The following three figures demonstrate a hierarchical

representation of each research question along with the themes and sub-themes that were present in the data analysis of the six individual semi-structured interviews.

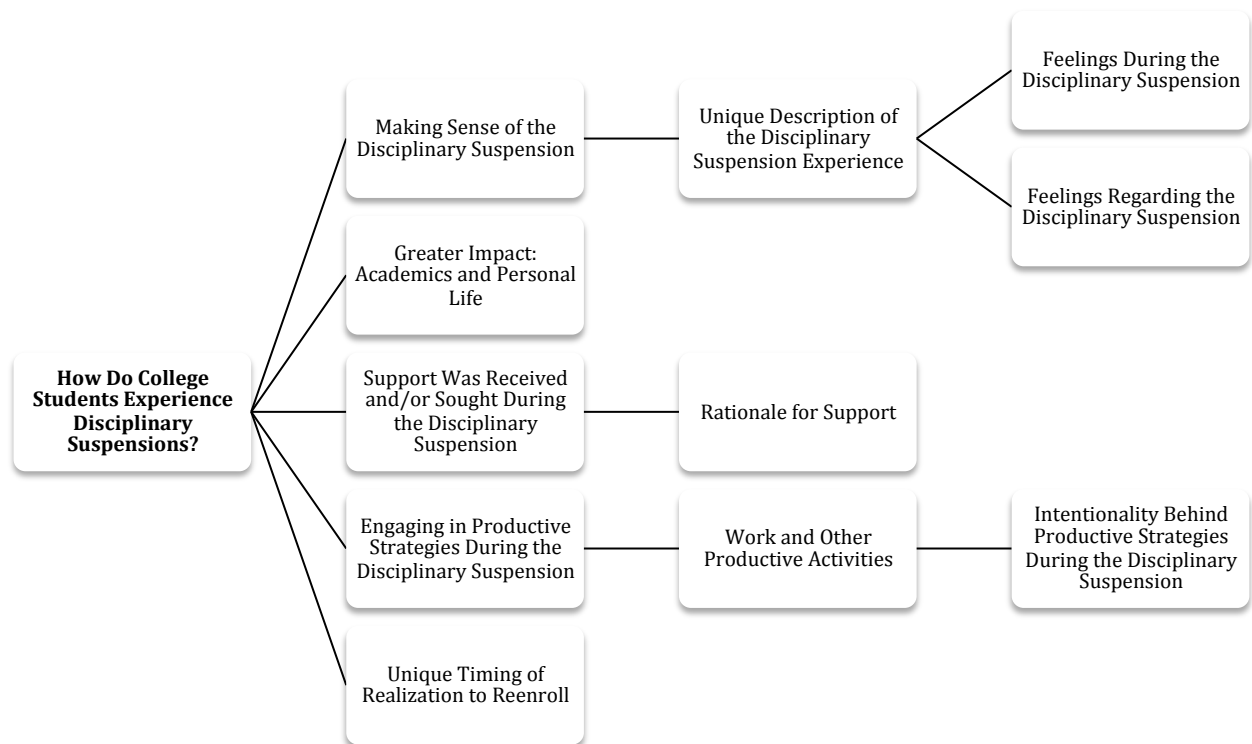


Figure 5. Research question one (RQ1) with its themes and sub-themes.

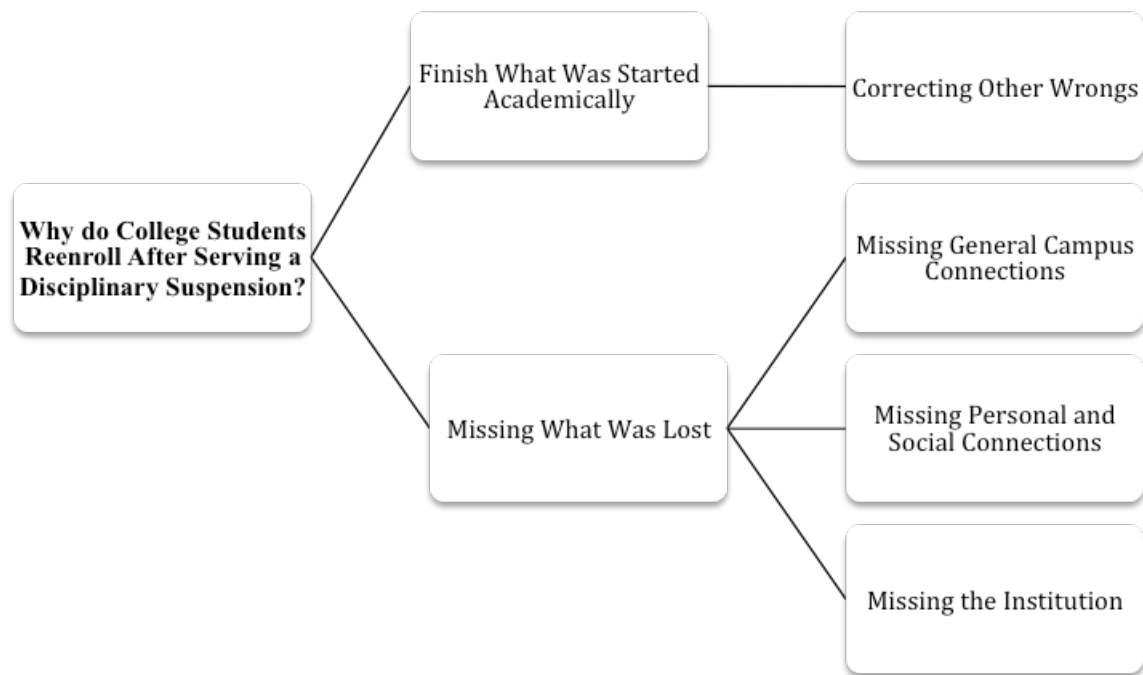


Figure 6. Research question two (RQ2) with its themes and sub-themes.

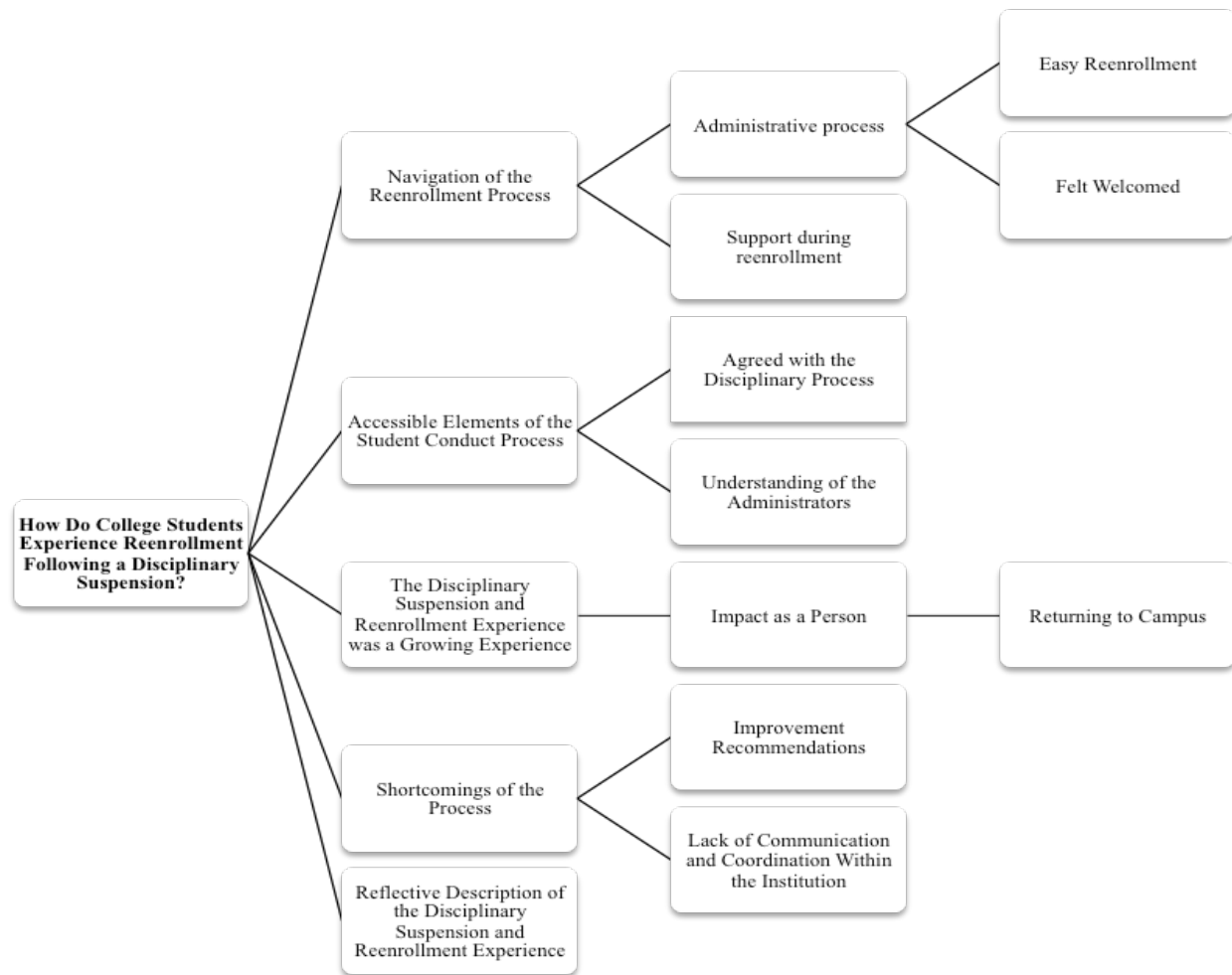


Figure 7. Research question three (RQ3) with its themes and sub-themes.

When describing how phenomenological results should be presented, Plano-Clark and Creswell (2010) stated, “Expect that the findings will include major themes about the central phenomenon along with presenting descriptions of what and how the phenomenon is experienced and a statement of the essence of the experience” (pp. 292-293). In order to answer the three research questions, the following sections include descriptions of the common lived experiences of these six college students. It is important to keep in mind that van Manen stated, “. . . Even though phenomenology employs empirical material, it does not make empirical claims. Phenomenology does not generalize from an empirical sample to a certain population, nor draw actual conclusions about certain states of affairs, happenings, or factual events” (2014, p. 249). Consequently, Findings then, are not generalizable.

Moving In and Moving Through: How College Students Experience a Disciplinary Suspension

The first research question was, “How do college students experience a disciplinary suspension?” I hoped to find out what the lived experience was like for these college students. What do they do while they are suspended? Why? Who do they rely upon? The four factors of Transition theory (Anderson, et al., 2012) were taken into consideration when analyzing the college student disciplinary suspension experience. The following themes and sub-themes can be observed in Figure 5.

Making Sense of the Disciplinary Suspension

All six college students made sense of and described the disciplinary suspension in their own unique ways. This was attributed to how they defined the situation, the support they received or sought, how they related the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience to themselves, and the strategies in which they engaged. As Schlossberg et al. (1981) promoted, this

unique description is in part, due to the variability in resources, which is reviewed below.

Discussing commonalities among the college students' lived experiences is important since it helps provide context for the disciplinary suspension. It is critical to also point out that all the students attended different institutions and this was their first time that each of these students "got in trouble" with the institution, which led to the disciplinary suspension. Furthermore, the types of violations that resulted in the disciplinary suspensions did not involve any victims and did not include any legal or criminal charges. In making sense of the disciplinary suspension, the students provided a unique description of the disciplinary suspension experience.

Unique Description of the Disciplinary Suspension Experience.

(Situation-Trigger, Self, Support, Control, Strategies, Timing)

A summary of the six college students that participated in this study is provided below:

| Pseudonym | Institution Type | Reason for Disciplinary Suspension | Length of Disciplinary Suspension |
|------------------|-------------------------|---|--|
| Laura | 4-year university | Falsification of information | 2 years; reduced to 1 year after an appeal |
| Tony | 4-year university | Cheating | 1 term |
| Jose | 2-year college | Submitting false financial aid documents | 1 year |
| Gabriel | 2-year college | Using an unauthorized parking permit | 1 year |
| Julio | 4-year university | Cheating | 2 terms |
| Cam | 4-year university | Possession of marijuana | 1 year |

Figure 8. Summary of the six participants with basic demographics.

Cam.

Two years ago, Cam's residence hall room was "raided" after it was reported that he was possibly "dealing" drugs. During the student conduct process, Cam informed the student conduct

officer that he was “dragged” into the situation, denied dealing drugs, but admitted to consuming marijuana. As a result, he was suspended for a year from his university:

Okay, so this happened because I was living in the dorms, this was during freshman year, and there was a big drug problem on campus, in this dorm. A lot of people were overdosing. Some people tried to kill themselves. So like, it was very, it was very bad. So, so this is when Public Safety and actually the cops were involved.

Julio.

In the early 2000s, Julio was confused on an assignment and asked a classmate for assistance. Julio did this in spite of being told by his professor that everyone was to work on their own. After submitting the assignment, Julio got an email from his professor, notifying him that the professor would be submitting an academic dishonesty report for Julio copying his classmate’s work. Julio denied copying the work, but admitted to receiving help from his classmate. Julio received a zero for the assignment, went through the disciplinary process, and eventually received a notice, informing him that he was suspended for two terms from the university.

Gabriel.

As Gabriel was heading to class in 2013, he walked past an employee parking permit on the floor. He recalled constantly struggling to find parking on campus and added, “So I was like, ok, you know what, I don’t have time for this. I see this. It will be quick. It will be fine. So I just used it.” He was caught using a parking permit that did not belong to him, given a ticket, and sent to a disciplinary hearing. However, Gabriel was unable to attend the hearing due to his work schedule. A few days later, he was notified that he had been suspended, and was also issued a trespass ban from the college.

Jose.

Jose submitted incorrect “financial aid paperwork” in 2009. After being notified of the alleged violation, and meeting with an administrator, he was notified that he was being suspended from the College for one year.

Tony.

Tony was caught cheating on one question during a math quiz about twenty years ago. The professor informed him that he did not want anything to happen to Tony, but had to report it to the Dean. Tony eventually met with the Dean and, reflected, “Regardless of what the professor wanted. The Dean stated that it was Policy that if any student got caught cheating, they would be suspended.” Tony was given the opportunity to drop from the current term and re-apply to the university. However, Tony elected to finish the term and accepted a one term-suspension, which was the second option offered.

Laura.

About four years ago, Laura was informed that she was being charged providing false information to her institution. After going through the student conduct process, she was notified that she was being suspended for two years and was issued a trespass ban from the university. After pursuing the appeal process, her suspension was reduced to one year.

Additional details on what led to each individual disciplinary suspension, along the students’ experience through the student conduct system, were intentionally not included since this was not the focus of the study. This study did not focus on or discuss whether or not the college students should have been suspended, if a disciplinary suspension was warranted, or the length of the disciplinary suspension. This study focused on what happened after the disciplinary

suspension was issued. All six students described the feelings they had during the disciplinary suspension.

This initial stage represented the *Moving in* period, which includes what the disciplinary suspension entails. Schlossberg (1981) stated that as a transition, this process can be confusing, and includes a realization that it will take time to learn the ropes. The participants certainly felt this way as they described their perceptions during the disciplinary suspension.

Feelings during the disciplinary suspension.

(Concurrent stress)

As the college students continued through this transition, they experienced concurrent stress. Laura recalls “a lot of waiting” and being “really angry.” She did not want to leave school because she had just started her graduate program. She was also placed on academic probation due to the low grades she received during her last semester. When describing the disciplinary suspension, Laura shared she was “a little lost” and:

I would describe it as difficult because my umm, my fiancé at the time, my husband, he was going to school as well. I actually had a trespass ban on me. So it was very hard to be around campus while my other half was going. So, it was difficult. And it was again it was kind of um, what’s the word, it was disheartening. I think that this [institution] did not want anything to do with me. If that makes sense.

Jose remembered being “really bummed.” He also stated, “[It] kind of hit me, like, holy crap, and, you know, I mean, I wasn't happy.” Jose also reflected during the suspension and realized the impact of his actions, “And it's not until you're actually there in the moment that you're like, holy crap, like, what did I get into.”

For Julio, the new transition “hit [him] like a ton of bricks. Julio added, “ I just had to deal with it and just suck it up and go with it.” Julio also stated that it was a “blurry time” where there was “a lot going on” and:

I think probably the worst I've felt ever in my life where I've just felt like a failure, like here I go. School didn't work out. And here I am just a few months after I left for college. I'm back home because I was suspended and I think I was really embarrassed . . . During that time, so I was embarrassed. I was ashamed. I was scared of who's gonna find out because I didn't want to like my extended family name my friends from high school that was that I didn't want them to judge me, so I didn't really say that I was suspended. So I felt like I had failed.

Cam shared, “Obviously, I was angry, a little bit upset. But I knew coming back would be good. I wanted to come back. I did like everything I could to make sure I was able to come back.” Meanwhile, Tony felt like he never left the institution in the first place. For him, it was just “not having the academic responsibilities for a while.” Overall, the feelings during the disciplinary suspension were different than the feelings they experienced regarding the disciplinary suspension itself

Feelings regarding the disciplinary suspension.

(Assessment)

Consistent with Evans et al. (2010), the college students made evaluations of the disciplinary suspension based on the individual college student’s view of the disciplinary suspension. The following describes how they assessed the disciplinary suspension.

As the college students made sense of the disciplinary suspension, they individually assessed it in their own unique way. For example, Laura felt the disciplinary suspension should

not have happened in the first place because it was “unjust,” “unnecessary,” “baseless,” and caused her to lose her financial aid. Laura also felt that the disciplinary suspension negatively impacted her academic plans and she was “cut off.” To Laura, her disciplinary suspension was a negative experience.

Tony stated the following regarding his disciplinary suspension, “Just a little upsetting, especially because I was a math major, and I trusted myself in math. I didn’t need to cheat. It was one question where I just drew a blank. I made the mistake of copying.” This caused Tony to be concerned about the details of the disciplinary suspension and who would be notified. Additionally, Tony stated that he took the disciplinary suspension “very seriously.”

Initially, Jose did not fully process the impact of his actions. He realized he had done something that was not ok but he did not focus on it. However, after he processed it, Jose thought, “this is not good.” The passing of time allowed Jose to fully understand his new situation.

For Gabriel, the initial thought was, “oh crap!” Gabriel also believed that the disciplinary suspension was responsible for losing motivation to return to school. Gabriel stated, “I just said, you know what, screw it. They don’t want me to go to school, I’m not going to go to school.” Gabriel rationalized not going back to school and did not pursue his academic goals.

Julio shared that he was “really scared” when he found out about the disciplinary suspension and thought it represented “the end of [his] academic career” and that it was “all over.” Julio wanted for the disciplinary suspension to pass so that he could eventually return to campus. For Julio, the faster this passed, the better the situation would turn out.

Cam was mad at the situation, and mad at himself. Cam added that he “definitely looked down upon [himself] because of what happened.” Additionally, he was “disappointed” that he

also had to move out of the residence halls. However, he did not think that a one year disciplinary suspension was severe since others at his institution were expelled.

The feelings during and regarding the disciplinary suspension provided unique descriptions. However, all the participants realized that other aspects of their lives were also influenced by the disciplinary suspension, which was an additional part of how they experienced the disciplinary suspension.

Greater Impact: Academics and Personal Life

(Relation to Self, Situation, Control or Source)

For these college students, the disciplinary suspension caused a ripple effect, which influenced other factors of their lives, such as their financial stability, scholarship opportunities, academic efforts, and where they lived. For example, for Gabriel, school became a “non-factor” and he put his academic aspirations behind him. For Laura, the disciplinary suspension also meant losing her financial aid; something she had no control over and caused her additional stress. Jose also experienced financial stress as he thought, “I don't have aid . . . but I had, you know, I still needed to pay more rent and stuff.” For Cam, it also meant additional stress as he assessed the current situation and started to strategize options since the suspension was reflected on his transcript. He realized that the disciplinary suspension would negatively impact applications to other institutions, which would require his transcript. Cam also worried that the disciplinary suspension would define him on paper to others who do not really know him.

The ripple effect included two items in one for Tony, “[I was] a little worried about the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) and how I was going to manage that. I eventually dropped the ROTC. I don't' think I would have been able to continue the scholarship with the

suspension.” Julio described the stress he felt as he identified strategies for his current academic plan, and identified items that he could control:

What I needed to do because if I was going to be finishing up at the end of the quarter, the year hadn't ended and so I had to figure out. Okay, I need to move back home. I need to move out. I need to figure out what the heck I'm going to do while I'm . . . when I, when I leave, and at the same time, I got to finish out this quarter dealing with the fact that I'm about to be suspended. And so I was thinking. Does it even matter? Should I even finish this quarter if I'm gonna be gone? Anyway, and I had to work on my finals and papers while I'm trying to figure out how I'm going to wrap things up because at the end of the quarter, I'm supposed to move out.

Julio had to consider many factors as he tried to make sense of the disciplinary suspension and determine possible next steps.

As these college students moved through the disciplinary suspension experience, they had to create options, make choices, and identify strategies to take charge of their new situation. Therefore, support was a crucial part of this stage of the college student disciplinary suspension experience.

As these six college students experienced *Moving through* the disciplinary suspension, they had to examine and execute choices and strategies to take charge of the new unique situation. Support, in various forms and for various causes, was an essential part of figuring these choices and strategies, as stated by Schlossberg (1981).

Support Was Received and/or Sought During the Disciplinary Suspension

(Support- Social Support Types, Measurement)

The participants described different types of social support they received and/or sought out during their disciplinary suspensions. However, the functions and measurement of the support were unique to each college student. This mirrored Anderson et al.'s (2012) description of support being considered when a transition is analyzed. For Jose, the ripple effect described above was also an example of the support that he received:

I had a very good friend of mine who actually ended up being I get, well, his parents ended up being my landlords, and they, they basically kind of supported me go through everything. And when they saw that, I, you know, I couldn't come up with funds, they basically let me kind of stay like, at their home.

When asked how she got through the disciplinary suspension, Laura shared, "Well, my family, my closest friends, um, of course my other half, and then, in January or the beginning of spring. 2013 when the . . . started, I was, I had just given birth to my first child. Um. So, yeah, so, basically my other half, my family, my son. They're the ones who helped me, I guess, stay afloat." The support that Laura received was dependent on the fact that she had a significant other who was by her side and provided affect and affirmation. Tony identified stable supports within his roommates, his supervisor and the people he was "close" to, which provided affirmation and allowed him to continue living on campus and work extra hours at work, respectively.

Gabriel received affect, affirmation, and honest feedback from his family, children, and his job, which in part allowed him to not think about the current situation. He shared, "Honestly, they just kept my head above water, and then [I] focus[ed] my time to do all that. I didn't really have much [time to] dwell on the fact that I wasn't going to school." Julio also identified his family as a stable support that provided financial support, a home to live in, and motivation since

they represented his “biggest support system from the start . . .” Julio also received support from individuals at both his original and new institutions and added:

I would say my family again because they're the ones that kept me motivated and like looking at big picture, you know, whenever I felt like tired and I don't want to do homework. I don't want to go to work. My mom is always pushing like okay remember you're doing this because you have to get these classes ready so then when you go back to your campus, you're ready to go and keep going and you don't fall behind. So, I'd say my family . . . There was one academic advisor at [the original institution]. He was really good. And he worked with me to make sure that my GPA was good. He's the one that worked with [the Student Conduct Office] to ensure that I was able to take classes during the summer, he's the one that helped me fill out the paperwork and the form and to go back. He's the one that motivated me to go back to campus and what's awesome is that I met him before I got suspended and during a program in the dorms and so we had that connection and he kept motivating me like you can do this. You can do this . . . One of my professors at the community college, I was taking a math class. And one day I stayed after and I told him what was happening and he was very encouraging as well. And he was saying, you know, things like this happen and it's what you learn from them and he's very encouraging. And he said, *'do well in the class and if there's anything I can do to help you get back there. Let me know.'* And so he was he was really good guy.

Julio's support was multifaceted since it included the faculty from the institution he attended during the disciplinary suspension, an Academic Advisor from the institution where he hoped to reenroll, and it originated from his home; specifically, his family.

Cam also shared the important role his family played during his suspension, “Um, so I'm financially, I was, it was my parents. I was living at home, obviously, they helped support me financially, really, emotionally, or whatever, I didn't really go to anyone else.”

But why or how did these college students receive or seek this support during their disciplinary suspension? These participants did not just have support as a common theme amongst their experiences. These participants had specific rationale for the support that they sought or received, which was a sub-theme in this study's findings.

Rationale for support.

(Support- Functions of Support, Measurement).

For the participants, it was about choosing whether to tell others about the disciplinary suspension or keep this as a secret. Before these participants accepted or sought any support, the functions of the support and their measurement were taken into consideration. Laura realized that some of her support systems changed and identified whether or not they had a function. Laura verbalized, “Well, I mean, I was able to distinguish like especially for friends, um, who was there to help me through this time and then there was those that just kind of left. So it was easy for me to pick who I could rely on.” Tony realized that he had stable support with his family, which allowed him to seek support with the purpose of being honest with them. Meanwhile, Cam believed that the support he received from his family would change once they found out about his disciplinary suspension, which is why he initially kept the disciplinary suspension from them. However, he eventually shared the truth with them since he moved back home during the disciplinary suspension.

Gabriel was intentional about not sharing what happened with his classmates and co-workers since they would not be able to fulfill a specific support function, such as being reliable.

However, he shared what happened with his spouse, who provided affirmation and honest feedback, as he stated, “She understood why I did it. She’s gone to school before. She knows the headache that parking is but also she’s more like, you’re an idiot because you got caught. You’re an idiot for doing it.” This internal negotiation on the measurement of support was present amongst all participants as they determined what support to receive and/or seek during the disciplinary suspension. These support structures also allowed the participants to engage in productive strategies during their disciplinary suspensions.

Engaging in Productive Strategies During the Disciplinary Suspension

(Strategies- Modify Situation, Control Meaning, Manage Stress in Aftermath)

Another common experience amongst these college students regarding how they experienced a disciplinary suspension is that they actively engaged in productive strategies. For the participants, wasting time during the disciplinary suspension was not an option. Laura, Julio, and Cam decided to engage in direct action by modifying their current situations in hopes of being able to have a smoother transition back to campus. They all attended different institutions during their disciplinary suspensions.

Cam stated, “So I decided to do that. Take some courses, get ahead a little bit.” He attended a college that was close to his family’s home. Similarly, Julio enrolled in a community college in his hometown. Julio added, “And so I looked at, I met with a counselor, we looked at articulation agreements and my major. And so I said, Okay, I’m going to knock out my general education classes.” Laura also decided to continue her education and enrolled in an online college. This common lived experience played out on a wider spectrum for all participants, as discussed below, which included engaging in strategies that would utilize their time, keep them

occupied, help them process the disciplinary suspension, assist them financially, and ultimately, allow them to reenroll back to their original campuses.

Work and other productive activities.

The participants also engaged in other productive activities during the disciplinary suspension, which included working, among other strategies. Laura also decided to engage in *information seeking* regarding the rationale for her suspension and contested her suspension to a Federal agency. Meanwhile, Jose relied on his previous support networks in order to work and intern at the place that would eventually become his current career place of work. Tony engaged in a similar strategy by keeping his part-time job, and continued living in the residence halls (unsanctioned) with the support offered by his roommates. For Gabriel, the active strategy that he employed was tied to his family. Gabriel worked and focused on “taking care of [his] kids since they’re getting older.” Besides going to school during his disciplinary suspension, Julio also worked full-time:

I also worked. I worked at the same job where I worked when I was back in in high school . . . I didn't even have much time to do so because I was working in the mornings and then I get off work in the afternoon. Go home. Eat change and then go to school and I was going to school at night and then I would finish up and then go home, sleep, and then do it over again the next day.

Cam mirrored a similar experience as Julio. Cam tried to avoid thinking about the stress associated with no longer being at his previous institution and added:

So yeah, I was working a lot on that definitely kept me busy, doesn't get my mind off things as well . . . did like everything I could to make sure I was able to come back. Like, there was required community service. I did that. I completed all the sanctions that were

reported . . . So Friday, Saturday, but then I got a job for the week from Monday through Friday, for 25 hours a week as a janitor at my local department of transportation. Cam juggled school and work in order to actively participate in a strategy for his new reality as a result of his disciplinary suspension.

These students could have decided to do less or non-productive. Why or how did these college students decide to do what they did during their respective disciplinary suspensions? These college students engaged in careful internal and external deliberation regarding what strategies would yield productive results for their respective situation during the disciplinary suspension.

Intentionality behind productive strategies during the disciplinary suspension.

(Support- Information Seeking, Support-Direct Action).

These college students were intentional about the activities that they engaged in during the disciplinary suspension. Making sense of their new realities propelled them to be creators of strategies. Laura hoped she did not fall behind academically and wished for the same pace she was used to at the institution she was suspended from. She shared, “I want to further my knowledge...to fill in my time because I was always just on about school. Gotta do this. Gotta do that.”

When faced with his new reality, Tony saw a problem and he also saw a solution. For Tony, it was about his finances and doing something about it. He added, “I needed the money and I had the free time so I thought I would make myself productive.” Jose’s financial situation also influenced his decision to work during the disciplinary suspension and realizing that his solution was to find a job. For Gabriel, the realization that years had passed since his disciplinary suspension started was a major motivator for him:

I, honestly it's because it's the only thing that can keep you ahead in this life without government assistance . . . I can't do that. I get restless after I get home. Like, even my days off, I feel like I'm not doing anything or doing something like I feel like I've wasted myself. It's such a weird feeling. And I've never had it before. And the thing is that it's because I know that I'm getting older. So time weighs on just differently now than it did before. Like now, I actually see it, like I can feel it. It's weird. I think it's just the acknowledgment I guess. Finally. You know, I am continually passing even though that we get everything we want a day.

Gabriel hoped that working during the disciplinary suspension was about proving that he had control of the situation and chose not to rely on external support services that could provide financial assistance. Additionally, Gabriel employed a new lens of viewing his current situation during the disciplinary suspension when he decided to begin the process to reenroll.

Julio also did not want to "just sit around and let those two quarters fly because [he] wanted to go back and [he] wanted to do something." Therefore, Julio hoped that by taking classes during his suspension, he would not fall behind academically and recalled, "But I also felt like fuck it, I have to get up and get over this because I need to go back to school and pick up where I left off." Julio felt that he had control over the direct solution for his disciplinary suspension in order to reenroll.

For Cam, engaging in this active solution was also a product of self-realization and acknowledgement:

Well, I'm, to be honest, like, school wasn't really that hard. So, I feel like one that would keep me out of trouble a little bit. Like, if I'm working, I can't really go out and do things that would get me in trouble.

Cam wanted to “just to have some money on the side” as spending money. However, he also experienced feelings of wanting to not fall behind academically and shared that he wanted to “stay in the zone of education.” Cam looked at how his current actions could impact his academic future and realized that his current decision to enroll in classes would allow him to not take a heavy course load upon return to his original institution.

These college students engaged in a variety of strategies in order to make meaning of their current reality while carefully deciding why and how they would do so. But when did they actually decide to reenroll? Did they know they wanted to come back to the institution from the start of the disciplinary suspension process? Or did it take some time to come to that realization?

Unique Timing of Realization to Reenroll

(Relation to Self, Strategies)

These college students all realized at various points in the disciplinary suspension that they wanted to reenroll at their institution. Laura knew she wanted to reenroll since the day she found out she was suspended. Tony had the same idea, “I think it was kind of part of the plan, that I had in speaking with the Dean.” Julio had the realization when he was notified of his suspension. Likewise, Cam knew from the beginning that he would want to reenroll:

So my mindset was always that like, ever since I did get suspended, I would come back.

Because I, I really had no other option . . . Yeah, we all talked about it from the very beginning that I'll be going back that I want to go back.

Cam focused on reenrolling to his institution from the day he was notified of his disciplinary suspension.

For Jose, this realization took some time and he did not “give it a thought for a while.” Eventually, “it was one of those things where one day I just said, Hey, you know, I finally got up

and was everything kind of pulling me down. I'm like, nope, let's go to school. And let's go sign up. So I went and I actually went to go apply.” Gabriel also came to that realization after some time. He realized that he had been out of school for four years and could have finished his degree by that time. At that point, he realized he should return to school.

Ultimately, these six college students reenrolled after their disciplinary suspension. Why would a college student return to the institution that suspended them for violating the respective code of conduct? These insights would answer the second research question for this study.

Why College Students Reenroll After Serving a Disciplinary Suspension

The second research question for this study was “Why do college students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension? This question sparked curiosity and confusion at the same time. Why would these college students choose to return the institution that removed them for their conduct? Figure 6 provides a visual representation of the themes and sub-themes that answered these questions.

Finish What Was Started Academically

(Strategies- Control Meaning, Strategies-Control Situation, Strategies-Direct Action)

For these college students, reenrolling in their respective institutions after serving their disciplinary suspensions represented a direct action in order to modify the current situation (the disciplinary suspension) and control meaning (return to their original institution). These college students all aimed to finish what was started academically by reenrolling.

This started to answer Stipson and Janosik’s (2007) question regarding this subject. It was as simple as an internal desire to finish their academic goals. The simplicity of that drive was exemplified by Laura’s experience as she shared, “one of the reasons why was I wanted to finish my Master’s. And I felt like I was just so close and that um, I just wanted to, I really

wanted to just graduate.” A feeling of closing the loop on something that was started, an unfinished business, something so close, pushed these college students to reenroll. That clarity was also present for Tony, “It was just one hiccup on the way to graduate from college. I never lost sight of that plan during the suspension . . . and yeah, it was just the plan to graduate from college.” Jose stated that he also eventually realized that he needed to finish his degree. This realization of finishing his academic goals also manifested in Gabriel:

It kind of made me just kind of, let's just say I have to take care of everything. And here I am . . . And all my credits are there. So, I don't want to go through the process of having to transfer all my credits and stuff like that. I just want to finish my education and transfer to [4-year institution].

Julio also shared that he “needed to go back and finish because [he] had just started and [he] worked so hard to get there . . . for several reasons [he] had unfinished business.” Lastly, Cam felt that the desire to return and finish his academic goals was present from the start of the disciplinary suspension. However, reenrolling also allowed these students to correct other wrongs.

Correcting other wrongs.

Most of the college students identified a unique sense of correcting other wrongs by reenrolling at their institution. Reenrolling at their original institution would correct other issues that arose in their lives. Laura hoped to return to school so that she could afford to pay for her classes. For Jose, it was about an internal realization that he might have to cover the cost of his education on his own, and agreeing with it. Gabriel also had an internal awakening when he realized that by reenrolling in school, he would combat how fast time was passing by. Julio was

also propelled by a feeling of retribution as he hoped that reenrolling would “show” the administration that he was able to overcome the disciplinary suspension.

The desire of completing their academic goals that they started at their institution was one of the major reasons why these college students decided to reenroll. Tied to that drive, was also a hope to fill a void that was created by the disciplinary suspension.

Missing What Was Lost

(Relation to Self, Strategies- Manage Stress in Aftermath, Strategies- Control Meaning)

The college student disciplinary suspension created a separation between the student and the institution by removing the student from the institution for a specified amount of time. Being “away” during the disciplinary suspension produced a reality for these college student in which they missed aspects that were “lost” or left behind. As a result, these aspects became reasons for wanting to reenroll after serving the disciplinary suspension. These aspects included: general campus connections, personal and social connections, and the institution itself.

Missing general campus connections.

The college students missed general campus connections during the disciplinary suspension, which were reasons for these college students to reenroll after serving their disciplinary suspension. Laura hoped to reignite the positive experience she had at her institution. Laura reflected, “Yeah, I wanted to graduate and overall, my experience at the university had been positive, up to that point, and I wanted to continue that.” The institution held memories for Gabriel as he shared, “Honestly, because I like the school. I always liked the school because it has memories. My friends, other people that I know, I met there. I guess I had like a term of endearment type of thing.” Similarly, Cam missed the tightly-knit community at the institution. He framed this reason as, “I mean, I really do like the, the college is a very small

campus, which I like, it's, it's because it's small, it's like, close knit, you know, everyone, it's like, it's like a big family to be honest.” These general campus connections were missed by the college students during their disciplinary suspension and were a reason for their reenrollment. These closely resembled another specific factor that college students missed during their disciplinary connections; the personal and social connections they left behind when they were suspended.

Missing personal and social connections.

The personal and social connections these college students had at their institution were another specific reason for reenrolling. Tony added that he really enjoyed being at his institution and “being there on a social level” because he “had a really good time.” Gabriel reiterated that he had many friends back at his institution, and “a lot of lasting memories of some of [his] good friendships.” These social relationships were important to Gabriel since they originated at the college approximately 15 years ago. Julio wanted to finish his degree, but he wanted to “do it with [his] friends in a place that [he] really enjoyed. Similarly, Cam shared:

So like I said before . . . all my friends are there, you know, from first year. I made a lot of friends. I wanted to go back to them, um, you know, and then going somewhere else and restarting. I feel like that would be kind of difficult. It's like . . . you're in a house and you move to a different elementary school when you're a kid or a different high school, [or] you move out of state move into different house. [It's] kind of like the same situation. You got to readjust everything [and] re-know a different campus.

Missing the institution.

Missing the institution itself was another reason why the college students reenrolled. This included several aspects of the institution, which the college students identified with and missed. For example, Laura missed specific programs of the institution, such as the residence halls and

specific student support offices, which allowed her to have an “awesome experience” at the institution. These experiences allowed Laura to feel like the institution supported her and she added, “I trusted the University.” Tony declared that he simply never wanted to leave the institution in the first place and was grateful he was not expelled. Gabriel missed the school and the memories that he had created. Cam added:

I like the campus, it's nice campus. It's a nice school. I know everyone there says, nice, small campus, so I enjoy it. And actually, like, a lot of people were like telling me, why'd you come back? like, blah, blah, blah? I'm like, What do you mean? Like, what? Why don't you want to be here? I just, I just found that odd.

Cam did not understand why his classmates did not have the same appreciation for the campus as he did.

These college students missed aspects that were lost such as general campus connections, personal and social connections, and the institution itself, which were reasons for these students to reenroll at their respective institutions. But what was it like to reenroll at their respective institutions? This uncovered the response to the third, and last, research question in this study.

Moving Out: How College Students Experience the Reenrollment Following a Disciplinary Suspension

Part of fully understanding the college student suspension experience also included understanding how these college students experience reenrollment. Therefore, I explored the following third and final research question: How do college students experience reenrollment following a disciplinary suspension? The themes and sub-themes can be observed in Figure 7.

Even though every college student had to overcome their own disciplinary suspension, there were commonalities among all participants as they reenrolled at their respective

institutions. This stage of the college student disciplinary suspension represented the *Moving out* stage as they exited their role as suspended students and ended their disciplinary suspension.

These college students already knew what came next as they sought to engage in their next sense of purpose; reenrolling at their respective institution. What did these college students have to do in order to reenroll at their respective institutions?

Navigation of the Reenrollment Process

(Community Justice- System Accessibility, Community Justice- Reintegrate)

There was not anything automatic (not that there should have been) for these college students to return to their respective institutions after the disciplinary suspension. These college students followed a prescribed process in order to reenroll. This is where the examination of aspects of Community Justice begins, specifically, *System Accessibility* and *Reintegrate*. Tony shared that he navigated a short and simple process by simply enrolling in his classes once his disciplinary suspension was fulfilled. Even though this was not automatic and not overly complicated, Laura had to complete two extra steps. Laura shared, “my only thing I had to do was fill out a reenrollment form. And then I had to pay 100 dollars to solidify that.” Cam discussed having to reach out to the institution to inquire about his class schedule to make sure he was “on track,” which he found “very odd” since he thought the institution would be the one reaching out to him.

Julio described a bit more complex process of proving that he really wanted to return to the institution:

[I had to] figure out, read what the decision is. Read what you need to complete to come back and get the timelines. Stick to those because there's a process and you have to follow it and if you don't then you won't get to go back. At least not when they tell you

that you come back that you can come back. So you have to be very detailed, you have to be very dedicated during your suspension to do what you have to do in order to be able to go back, and do your paperwork. File it so that when you're ready to file it everything's complete [and] you can go back . . . so I would describe it as a time to get your act together prove to yourself that you really want to be in school and if you really want to be back then you'll do what you need to do to be back.

These internal conversations circled in Julio's mind as he attempted to complete the sanctions and abide by timelines associated with the necessary reenrollment paperwork.

Jose wished that he would have realized what the suspension really meant so that the reenrollment process would have been "easier" on him and avoid a "smack in the face." This was a part of an administrative process that the college students need to engage in as they reenrolled after their disciplinary suspensions.

Administrative process.

A part of that reenrollment process was an administrative process that the participants experienced a variety of administrative processes that needed to be executed. Even though Tony did not have to reapply, given the short term of his suspension, he simply had to add his classes. Laura had to submit her reenrollment form in person and pay an enrollment fee of \$100.

Jose described having to "speak to a Counselor (Academic Advisor) first." He shared the following interaction with the Academic Advisor:

So I set that up, and they're like, hey, well, you know, what, you have this, you have this thing on your, on your account where you can't, you can't come back. And basically, you have been, you've been kicked out of the school . . . they kind of asked me *'Are you are you sure you want to come back? You know, this is, this is, this is something big, and, and*

we don't want you to mess up again.' or some something along those lines . . . I had to retest for everything, because it's been so long.

This conversation served as reassurance for Jose since he realized he did in fact want to return to his campus and begin the reenrollment process.

Julio also had to meet with an Academic Advisor before reenrolling. However, this was because he had low grades at the time of his suspension and had also been placed on Academic Probation. However, Julio followed the advice of that same Academic Advisor and took courses during the terms he was suspended. As a result, he was able to “demonstrate” that he was academically ready to also return to the institution. Besides that, Julio completed paperwork to be reinstated to the institution. Cam shared that he was, “kind of surprised, because it was kind of a process to get reenrolled.” Cam had to complete additional assigned sanctions, which included the completion of an online module and community service. Gabriel encountered a hurdle when he missed a mandatory workshop. As a result, he had to wait another semester to reenroll because the workshop was only offered once per semester. Gabriel described it as the following, “like I said, the whole headache of jumping through hoops and everything. Take the course and go through all that. It was tedious, but it is what it is.”

Even though there were hurdles, meetings, setbacks, and financial costs to reenroll, all participants described some favorable aspects of the reenrollment process. This speaks to the Karp’s (2004) first principle, accessible, which includes the student conduct system being consistent, respectful, and not bureaucratic.

Easy reenrollment.

(Community Justice- System accessibility)

The participants experience some elements of the administrative process within the reenrollment process as “easy.” Tony was the prime example as he consistently said that his reenrollment was “pretty simple.” Similarly, Julio shared that through it all, the process was “pretty clear for him.” Once Cam elaborated on what he had to do in order to reenroll, he shared that the process was also “pretty simple.” The participants affirmed that this part of their respective institutions’ reenrollment processes were accessible since they clearly understood what to do in order to reenroll, and were able to complete it independently.

Felt welcomed.

(Community Justice- Reintegrate)

Along a different component of Community Justice, two of the college students briefly shared parts of their reenrollment experience which spoke to the student conduct processes’ reintegration efforts. Laura shared that the institution “opened the door” for her when it came time to reenroll. She added, “I’m not sure if that’s what they do but they [did] that for me.” Jose also felt that the institution wanted him to succeed when he reenrolled. Jose said, “I do feel that because it is a smaller school, they almost kind of set you up for success . . . they’ve been very helpful, you know, very encouraging, the professors have made me very comfortable.” This allowed Jose to get “back into the zone of like, being on campus and, and re adapting to that.”

Support during reenrollment.

(Support)

As part of the reenrollment experience, I intended to examine what support was present for the participants during this time. Even though the reenrollment process was accessible, these college students did not navigate the process alone. However, Gabriel stated that he went through the reenrollment process alone and did not receive support from anyone. Even though Tony

stated he was on his own during the process, he also stated that he was aware that he could rely on the Counselors and the Dean back at the institution. Similarly, Cam shared that he was “very independent” and “didn’t seek out for anyone else.” However, he did check in with the Dean and the conduct administrator to make sure he could return to campus. Laura relied on an existing support structure that she was able to access at the institution, even though she was not back at the time. Lara stated, “Oh, I had the [Office for Support for Women] on campus. They helped like a lot with [guidance] . . . they never tried to discourage me from maybe thinking twice about reenrollment. I don’t know. They were really good to me.” Jose received support from his partner as she motivated him to complete the enrollment process so that he could return to school. Julio received support from his Academic Advisor, “And so I would say he was part of my support system during the reenrollment process and yeah it was nice to have someone rooting for me back at that institution.”

The college students eventually successfully navigated their institution’s respective reenrollment processes. But, so what? Did the disciplinary suspension “work?” Did the disciplinary suspension assist with the Reparative Process of the student conduct system? Did these college students, that were suspended for violating their institutions code of conduct, learn anything? If you ask them, which I did, the answer is simple; yes.

Accessible Elements of the Student Conduct Process

(Community Justice- System Accessibility, Reflection)

A common theme across the lived experience of these college students was that they experienced elements of the student conduct process as accessible. This was evident by their descriptions of the process and the administrators. This theme reflected the accessibility as outlined in Karp and Clear’s (2000) community justice model. All six participants either agreed

with parts of the disciplinary process or with the work conducted by the student conduct administrator.

Agreed with the disciplinary process.

(Reflection)

This disciplinary process was the one outlined in the particular institution's student conduct code, which stated that a disciplinary suspension was a possible sanction for a violation. Tony, as shared in previous sections, had the most positive remarks on the disciplinary process. Tony stated that their actions were “justified” and “it was handled pretty well.” Tony attributed this positive experience with the fact that he was “honest and straightforward” with the administrators. Specifically, he added, “That was part of the reason why to, they're willing to work with me so well, and I would, you know, just describe my reaction and handling it the right way, thinking as part of the reason why it went the way it did.” Jose was more succinct and stated that the process was “completely understandable.” Similarly, Gabriel shared, “I mean, I guess, I understand why it was necessary. I’m not putting it past it . . . I’m fine with it. I don’t hold any ill will towards anyone. It was tedious. That was pretty much it.” Lastly, Julio shared that he understood since the administrator were “just doing what they had to do.” Julio recalled that he had been warned that this situation could ensue, so he was not surprised. He added, “And so I was just a part of the process and no hard feelings you know [the conduct administrator] did what he had to do followed the process and [the conduct administrator] was transparent and I could say that.” The participants also mentioned specific elements of the disciplinary process being accessible, specifically access to administrators.

Understanding of the administrators.

Administrators ensured that students were provided with their due process, which eventually led to their disciplinary suspension. Tony described the Dean as “very nice, very accommodating, and kind of very nice about the whole thing.” Meanwhile, Jose shared that he was surprised that he was not expelled by the conduct administrator and added, “I completely get it, you know, I don't want to say that they did anything bad or something, you know, they follow school protocol.” Cam was also appreciative that he was allowed to return to campus and stated that some of the actions of the conduct administrators were “a big help.” Julio shared that the conduct administrator did “what he had to do.” Even though Gabriel believed the suspension was too much, he added, “I’m fine with it. I don’t hold any ill will towards anyone.” Similarly, Laura stated that now she understands why the conduct administrator did what she did, even though Laura disagreed with the outcome.

This starts to speak to an additional common lived experience by these college students. They all verbalized something that they learned through the experience.

The Disciplinary Suspension and Reenrollment Experience Was a Growing Experience

(Self, Community Justice- Reparative Process, Reflection).

The fourth principle of Karp’s (2004), Community Justice theory stated that the student conduct process must assure that the student will not cause future harm. This next section dissects the student’s responses around this factor. The college student described the disciplinary suspension and the reenrollment experience, as a growing one. All participants described parts of their experience as they engaged in a reflective process.

As part of her reflection, Laura described a “drive to just fight for what [she] believed in” a result of the overall experience. She stated that it was “the biggest thing” that the disciplinary

suspension and reenrollment experience taught her. Tony shared how the experience impacted his academic aspirations:

I definitely took school more seriously . . . I think having that experience, I guess, maybe made me understand when I came back, you know, what was necessary, to finish school and I think, still kind of holding that experience, you know, in mind, I guess, coming back to school, I, you know, I did it the right way, and studied and learned and, did it for, for the purpose of educating myself, not just to get a degree but actually learn the material. And yeah, I think I was, I would see cheating and, you know, more so, from their perspective, you know, as an adult in school and student, a young student in school became is something maybe that a lot of people do, not really taking it too seriously. But yeah, maybe it helped me eventually graduate.

Jose stated that the growing overall experience was “very eye opening” and added that he realized, “it's time it's time to move on. It's time to grow up. . . so, that was a little bit of like, my first real, real, real awakening, like a, you know, like you gotta, you gotta do something.” Gabriel had a specific take-away from the overall experience that he could apply to a variety of situations. He stated that the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience taught him that he “shouldn’t be doing stuff that most likely is going to be something that is going to get [him] into trouble” since he “should know better than that.” Julio stated that he learned that he must hold himself accountable and had a realization that he is responsible for whatever consequences are produced by his actions and added:

It taught me to the importance of knocking on doors, the importance of asking those questions, getting to know people, following procedures, and following the rules so that you don't get caught up doing something stupid that's gonna get you kicked out of school.

So it made me; it made me a stronger person at the end and I learned a lot and it sucked but made me be a better student and a better person. I would say . . . now I see this suspension as a learning opportunity. It helped me mature. It helped me grow. It helped me be, like I said earlier, a better person, a better student.

For Cam, this experience provided him the opportunity to be a “better person.” He was able to focus on his health and see it as his passion, which is “helping as well with either stress or anger.” In exploring more on the specifics of this “growth” as a result of the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience, it was evident that these college students also experienced growth on a greater scale.

Impact as a person.

These six college students also experienced specific growth or developmental impacts on them as people as a result of their lived experience. Laura shared that she is “a stronger person because of this” and is able to apply her learned knowledge to other situations. This observation goes beyond ethical or moral development, which was not a part of this study. Cam described the experience as a “roadblock” in his “journey” which has given him a greater focus on his academics. Tony stated that he has a greater responsibility for his work. He shared that the experience “helped him really kind of focus on . . . what [he] needs to do for [himself] to get things done, and ultimately just made [him] realize [he] needs to be more responsible for [himself].” Jose experienced greater academic success, which he attributes to what he learned from the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience. Jose also shared that he has a greater appreciation for the resources and activities available at his institution and is more vocal with his peers as he encourages them to also take advantage of these resources and activities. He added, “And now I look back and it's like, oh, my God, like, how could you not see that there is

so much you know, so many people there for you, so much so many opportunities for you to succeed.”

This growth allowed these college students that their actions that led to the disciplinary suspension did not make them bad individuals. Julio stated that it’s helped him realize that he is a “good person” and it motivated him to “become a better person every day.” Gabriel shared that he has “changed” his interactions with his children as a result of this experience, and has started telling them about the importance of achieving their academic goals. Gabriel expressed excitement regarding his current academic success:

I'm doing everything possible. I mean, you have no idea how much I, I kind of gave myself a high five yesterday because I completed all my homework on time early. I was like holy crap, I haven't done that forever, like I remember I used to do this when I was a kid. It's cool. It's nice to be able to say that I can go back to school and have the opportunity to do that . . . Everyone should have a code of conduct. Personal or otherwise. There are rules. Those rules are there for a reason. And that's something that looks like you shouldn't be done. Maybe you should take that as a, I don't know, as a warning for yourself.

Returning to campus.

(Reflection)

Although this was not a focus of this study, some of the college student shared what it was like to re-focus on their academic goals. Laura shared, “Just picking up where you left off, it was hard for me.” Meanwhile, Tony stated that he “Never really missed a beat.” For Jose, he shared that he went back “little by little” and felt encouraged to know that he is “going in the right direction.” Cam also shared some insight into what was like for him to return to campus:

I feel normal again, I'm, I'm not really scared. Because I'm back. I'm happy to be back.

You know, I changed some, I'm a good person, you know, like, I'm proving myself improving my worth at this place now, versus leaving and not coming back. So I'm able to prove myself that hey, I do want this, you know, I'm back and better. So, I'm trying.

Throughout the interviews, the participants shared pieces of their experience, which they believed were “not ideal” and could have been better on the part of the institution.

Shortcomings of the Process

The experiences of these students' disciplinary suspensions and reenrollment processes were complex and difficult at times. Although not a major theme, it was valuable information that I did not want to ignore, since it speaks to the larger institutional process. For example, Laura and Cam believed that he should not have been suspended. Laura stated that it was “an unjust suspension,” which made her feel like the institution “failed” her and like the institution “did not want anything to do” with her. Similarly, Cam stated that he never received a warning, was “never given a chance,” and was simply suspended as the institution experienced heavy drug use on campus. Gabriel also stated that the disciplinary suspension should be issued to someone who actually did “something worse” than his violation. Gabriel saw the disciplinary suspension as “completely excessive” since others who have “committed worse, get to walk around campus.” Julio stated that his disciplinary suspension was a result of the institution “cracking down” on cases of academic dishonesty. The college students had their own recommendations on the process.

Improvement recommendations.

The students' recommendations for the process were straightforward. Laura called for an “easier” process for students, given her experience. Laura saw an opportunity for the process to

not cost money for the student. Laura stated that these improvements would make it easier for students that want to reenroll. Laura also felt that one of the administrators that handled her case was not properly trained to handle that type of case. This made Laura feel like the Conduct Administrator did not know what she was doing. Gabriel shared that the reenrollment process was difficult:

It's sometimes inconvenient for people, especially that they already have their lives established, family, work, stuff like that. That makes it difficult sometimes where things have to be specifically done in a certain way. There are no ands, ifs, buts, about it. And you kind of have to be able to maneuver your schedule in a very small timeframe and it's stressful.

Julio stated that he believed the hearing process was not fully explained to him and he was discouraged from pursuing a formal hearing, and as a result he "accepted" the disciplinary suspension and waived his right to a hearing. He hoped that the conduct administrator would have encouraged him to seek out all his options. Cam believed the institution should have followed up since he never withdrew from the institution. He hoped that this communication would truly convey that he is welcome back.

Lack of communication and coordination within the institution.

Some of the participants believed that parts of the institution did not communicate. Laura pointed out that there was not enough communication between the student conduct office and the graduate division, which resulted in some information falling "through the cracks" and recommended that "there should be another entity" that can ensure communication. Gabriel stated that he was not cleared to enroll in classes when he was supposed to be. As a result, he encountered difficulty finding open classes that fit his academic plan. Cam was told that he could

take classes at a community college during his suspension, which would transfer to his institution. However, upon return, he was notified by a different office that those classes did not transfer.

Reflective Description of the Disciplinary Suspension and Reenrollment Experience

As these six college students described their disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experiences, they reflected on their journey. Laura stated that the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience is “tough.” She added that she would encourage someone in the same situation to “fight” and “never give up.” After reenrolling, Laura went on to finish her graduate degree.

As part of his reflection, Cam felt like the institution had removed him from the institution and did not want him to return. He also stated that he is not proud of it. Additionally, even though it helped him, he did not believe it was the best way to discipline a student. However, he stated that he was given “the chance to come back,” and described the experience as:

A time for you to either find yourself or get a job, get your mind off things definitely helps you, helps you determine what you really want to do. If you want to go back or whatnot, or you want to do something else, it gives you a chance to like re-evaluate everything.

Cam earned a 4.0 GPA the first semester he reenrolled at his original campus and he continues to work on his undergraduate degree.

Gabriel’s disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience was four years long. Gabriel said, “Well it sucks, because, like I said, I wasted four years. If I would have done everything, right, the way that I was, I mean, I should have.” He does not recommend that

anyone take any shortcuts or violate the code of conduct. He stated that the disciplinary suspension, “makes you feel stupid . . . when you think back for the reason that you did it.”

Gabriel continues to succeed academically while balancing a full-time job.

Tony reflected and said the experience was “one hiccup on the way to graduate from college,” and was a “slap on the wrist.” He added that he would “not do it again.” Looking back, he was a “young kid” and his action that led to the disciplinary suspension was a “stupid mistake.” Tony went on to graduate from college and is successfully pursuing his career.

Julio’s reflection included sharing that he never thought he would have been involved in a situation like that. He added that the experience was an opportunity for him to “get [his] act together” and “figure out if [he] really want[ed] to be in school.” He added that it was a “tricky” and “scary” time where, “it feels kind of like you're alone and everybody's watching you and you just have to get over it and do what you need to do to overcome it and and get your act together.” He also stated that it had “a domino effect” on his personal and academic life.

You have to figure out who you can be honest with and figure out who are the people that you can trust because it's not something easy to talk to. It's something embarrassing. So you figure out who are your true friends who are your family members that you can trust and talking to them about what happened and being honest but also being honest with yourself about what happened and it's an opportunity to figure out things. Time goes by really fast and you have to figure out, bam, what are you going to do. Are you going to work? Are you going to go to school? What school you're going to?

Julio graduated from the institution, went on to pursue a graduate degree, and is currently successfully pursuing his career.

Jose described the overall experience as “a little eye opening,” “probably annoying,” “but necessary.” He also added, “You know, if it's something that you, yourself made, if it's a mess, that you simply like, you know, it's just consequences that you have to deal with.” Jose went on to finish his degree, is considering transferring to a university, and currently works in a supervisory role at the same company where he interned during the disciplinary suspension.

Conclusion

These six college students experienced unique disciplinary suspensions and reenrollment processes. However, as detailed above, the similar rich experiences shared by these six college students answered the three research questions for this study. The college students experienced a variety of emotions during the disciplinary suspension, engaged in various activities, had other aspects of their lives directly impacted, and received support. Although not a theme and not fully explored, a “financial” thread was present through their lived experiences. This present from stressors at the beginning of the suspension and through the rationale for the activities they engaged in during the disciplinary suspension. They reenrolled because they missed what was lost and wanted to finish their academic goals. Additionally, in order to reenroll, they navigated unique, accessible, administrative processes. They also described growing as individuals, expressed their displeasure with parts of the student conduct process, and reflected on their overall experience. In doing so, these experiences provided opportunities to engage in additional practices and research within student affairs and student conduct administration.

CHAPTER 5. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Summary

This study explored the lived experiences of six college students that reenrolled at their respective institution after serving a disciplinary suspension. As a result, this study unearthed the types of activities college students engaged in once they were suspended, their feelings toward and during the suspension, their support systems, contributions to their decision to reenroll, and the processes they navigated in order to reenroll. Overall, this study also highlighted and assessed the educational nature of higher education student conduct systems through the disciplinary suspension.

As discussed in chapter one, higher education student conduct systems and criminal justice systems are rooted in providing due process. Even though both are fundamentally fair, they differ in philosophy and practice. Student conduct administrators, codes of conduct, due process, and sanctions are all components of the higher education conduct systems' educational philosophy, which tends to be more student-centered and educational than the criminal justice system. Additionally, student conduct processes, along with suspensions, are supposed to promote growth, learning, and accountability (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008). Lastly, and most importantly, student conduct administration is guided by an educational philosophy, not a legal one (Waryold & Lancaster, 2008). This section summarized the student conduct process in higher education as educational in nature.

Chapter two outlined the present literature (and lack thereof) within higher education student conduct. As previously shared, student conduct in the K-12 system has been widely researched, but the opposite is true for higher education. Specifically, Bostic and Gonzalez (1999) stated, "Relatively few studies . . . have addressed policies, processes and procedures in

judicial affairs” (p. 167). Additionally, Dannells (1990), Janosik (2007), Kompalla and McCarthy (2001) and VanKuren and Creamer (1989) all stated that there is a lack of research on student misconduct beyond due process issues. Stimpson and Janosik (2007) explicitly stated, “There is little published research on how a disciplinary suspension is used or its results” (p. 496). According to Stimpson and Janosik (2007), “If in fact student conduct systems are educational, it only stands to reason that one goal of disciplinary suspension would be the eventual reenrollment and graduation of the suspended student” (p. 496). This study assisted in closing the loop on the student conduct process while confirming its intended educational mission. Stimpson and Janosik (2007) also asserted, “If in fact the student conduct process is an educational endeavor as many claim, time must be spent investigating the educative value of student conduct systems” (p. 509). As a result, this study was designed to examine the lived experiences of college students that were suspended from their institution for violating the code of conduct and eventually reenrolled.

In order to carry out an intentional effort, my study was approached using Schlossberg’s (1981) transition theory given its explanation of how college students experience transitions and changes. My study was also approached using Karp and Clear’s (2000) community justice model given the direct applicability of its four principles for student judicial practices. Phenomenology as a research approach was key in exploring the college student disciplinary suspension since the college student disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience is a lived experience and a phenomenon. Phenomenology assisted to unearth the lived experiences of these college students, as described by van Manen (2014). The following research questions were answered through semi-structured questions asked during interviews with six participants:

- 1) How do college students experience disciplinary suspensions?

2) Why do college students choose to reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension?

3) How do college student experience reenrollment following a disciplinary suspension?

The lived experiences of these college students were analyzed. There is not a single and simple answer to how college students experience a disciplinary suspension and reenrollment. Each disciplinary suspension experience is unique and complex, full of reflection, wonder, and a desire to do something during the disciplinary suspension. In total, this study exposed various common lived experiences among six college students that reenrolled after serving a disciplinary suspension. These common lived experiences formed themes and sub-themes, which answered the three research questions as a collective. The lived experiences included details of disciplinary suspensions, what they did during the suspension, who they relied as support systems, why they returned to their institution, and the processes they navigated in order to reenroll. The results of this study also aid in determining the effectiveness of student conduct systems and add to the examination of student conduct systems and provide recommendations, as called for by Dannells (1997).

Key Findings and Discussion

I chose two theoretical frames, which indicated what items I would discuss and analyze, and for which I would not focus. Throughout this study, I did not highlight the broader perspectives of Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory since these were mirrored in other parts of the theory. These included the three-component process which are *approaching transitions*, *taking stock*, and *taking charge*. Instead, I focused on *moving in*, *moving through*, and *moving out*, and *potential resources*, the 4 S's (which happen to be a part of *taking stock*). Not much was produced on *personal characteristics*. Within *self*, the data did not produce opportunities for

analysis within *personal characteristics*, which is further explained later on in this chapter as an opportunity for further research.

In order to analyze the reenrollment experience, and pair well with Schlossberg's (1981) Transition Theory, I utilized the four principles for student judicial practices (Karp, 2004). I emphasized *re-integrative process* and *system accessibility*, and did not focus on *reparative processes* and *community involvement*. Accordingly, I provided suggestions for additional research that align with the *Outcomes* of Karp and Clear's (2000) community justice model; *restoration, integration, community capacity, community satisfaction*.

The lived experiences of six college students during the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment were analyzed through a phenomenological approach. Even though the results of this study are not generalizable (van Manen, 2014) to all students that are suspended, much can be learned from these findings.

As college students enter the transition, they all make sense of their experience in their own unique way. This is impacted by the details of the suspension, such as the specific length and other sanctions that needed to be completed. During the suspension, college students experience concurrent stress, as stated in Schlossberg's (1981) theory, such as anger, confusion, and being upset. As the college students assessed the situation (Schlossberg, 1981), they described feelings of disappointment, negativity, and eventual realization of the transition at hand regarding the disciplinary suspension.

As they move through the transition, the disciplinary suspension impacts other factors of the college student's lives such as financial standing, living situation, and support network. A part of moving through this transition, as stated by Schlossberg (1981), is finding and or receiving support, which may be by family, friends, colleagues, or significant others. The college

students also carefully measured each support network (Schlossberg, 1981) in order to determine whether to seek it, receive it, or both.

College students engaged in intentional productive strategies during the disciplinary suspension in order to manage the stress, modify the situation (Schlossberg, 1981), and control the meaning of that transition (Schlossberg, 1981). Work and school were the two main activities that college students engaged in during the disciplinary suspension. There was also intentionality when determining what specific strategy to execute, such as assessing the greatest financial benefit.

The realization or desire to reenroll after a disciplinary suspension came at different times for these college students. This varied from the time they were informed of the disciplinary suspension to several years later. One of the main reasons why college students reenrolled was to finish what they started academically. A second main reason for their reenrollment was that they missed what was lost as a result of the disciplinary suspension, which included general campus connections, personal and social connections, and the institution itself.

College students moved out (Schlossberg, 1981) of the disciplinary suspension experience by reenrolling back at their institutions. In order to reenroll, these college students navigated an administrative process. The work and ownership was on the student if they wanted to return to the institution. All students described some components of the reenrollment process as *accessible*. Interestingly, not all college students believed they should have been suspended. However, they all either agreed with the student conduct process or did not hold negative feelings towards the student conduct administrator. Most participants shared that the reenrollment process was easy and they felt welcomed back to campus. Through this part of the transition, they also received or were offered some form of support in order to successfully

navigate the reenrollment process. As these college students reflected, they all described some component of the disciplinary suspension experience as a “growing” or developmental one. This developmental impact also influenced them as individuals and people.

Lastly, all college students experienced negative perceptions of the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience. As a result, they also provided recommendations on how the overall process could be improved. The overall description of the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience was unique to each student. None of them stated that they were glad they went through it, but they were able to articulate what they learned through this transition.

Contributions and Implications

The findings above have important contributions and implications for practice and research within student conduct, disciplinary suspensions, and the reenrollment experience. The two sections below discuss these contributions and implications in terms of practice, research, and theory.

Future Practice

As reviewed earlier, most institutions of higher education include disciplinary suspensions as part of their sanctions for violations of their codes of conduct (Stimpson & Janosik, 2007, p. 496). However, the gaps in the literature indicate that student conduct administrators do not have the necessary tools, language, or student voices in order to execute their functions such as determining how to support a student that is facing a disciplinary suspension and design any additional sanctions that should accompany the disciplinary suspension. The following discussion outlines important contributions and implications for practice, specifically in the realm of student conduct administration.

A “financial” thread was present through the themes that arose in this study. This was evident from stressors at the beginning of the suspension, to the rationale for the activities they engaged in during the disciplinary suspension. This type of stressor may be due to the high cost of education and the current financial stressors that college students are facing in our current society. How are other stressors amplified as a result of a disciplinary suspension? Student affairs professionals and systems should be equipped with tools to assist students in facing these stressors when students are facing a disciplinary suspension. Schlossberg (1989) stated, the actual event is not the one that causes stressors. Instead, it is how the transition alters roles, relationships, and routines (Schlossberg, 1989). How should practitioners outline options for students in order to prepare them for stressors brought on by the disciplinary suspension? The answer is simple; student conduct administrators should engage students in conversations regarding what to expect during the disciplinary suspension. This could be aided by an informational checklist, a pre-disciplinary suspension meeting, or a meeting to discuss the disciplinary suspension outcome. Additionally, the disciplinary suspension should be structured with some form of a connection to the campus. This could be a structured contact with a member of the institution or a reflection or journal on what activity the student engages in during the disciplinary suspension.

Stimpson and Janosik (2007) hypothesized that family members, educational goals, commitment, and maturation, might affect a student’s reenrollment decision, and this study validated those statements. For example, the participants shared that family members were a critical part of their support system during the disciplinary suspension experience. The participants’ educational goals and their commitment to finish what they started academically were also central reasons for their reenrollment.

This study highlighted the reasons why college student reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension. In doing so, it affirmed student affairs work as important and meaningful places and services for students. This was evident in the responses the college students provided as reasons for reenrollment: missing the institution, and missing campus connections. As a result, in our current times of re-organization and budget cuts, these student support services should continue to be funded and supported as they create places for students to find meaning and sense of belonging. Furthermore, this study validated that students' social connections matter. This was demonstrated by the responses the college students provided, sharing that they missed the personal and social connections they had on campus and that these were important reasons for them to reenroll. Institutions are creating a sense of belonging for students through personal and social connections.

College students may not be clear on the necessary steps they need to take in order to reenroll after a disciplinary suspension. Consequently, as a recommendation, student conduct practitioners must ensure that their processes and systems are truly *accessible*. This can be accomplished by outlining clear procedures that reflect that “the door is really open” for the student to reenroll once the disciplinary suspension and any additional sanctions are completed. One option for enhancing accessibility is having clearly outlined parameters for the student to follow, along with a contact person for inquiries. Implementing this will reassure the student that the institution does not want to simply remove them from the institution, but rather, would welcome the student to return as a specific point.

Student conduct systems need to reinforce that a suspension is ultimately welcoming the student to reenroll and should not be used as a possibility for the student not to return. What happens when an institution or administrator does not wish for the student to return to campus,

but the administrator does not recommend to expel the student? If the student's actions did not warrant expulsion, then the student is and should be allowed to return, despite the perceptions of the student conduct administrators. As such, the purpose of the suspension should be clear to the students and administrators. This purpose can be achieved by having clearly defined missions and processes that articulate and practice this ideal.

What are the implicit roles of the student conduct officer? They provide due process, educate students, and hold student accountable. Does this also entail fully explaining appeals and other hearing options? Who is there to "support" the student? At times, the conduct officer has the "burden" of proving that the information is true, therefore taking on the role of a "prosecutor." Meanwhile, the board of a hearing is supposed to be "neutral." Who exists for the student that can fully explain the specifics of the student conduct process? Can we expect the student to "trust" the student conduct administrator for assistance to reenroll? A way of executing this is by building transparency and communication from the start with the student: having meetings with the student in which the outcome is explained, explaining the rationale, and outlining the sanctions. Through these structured and intentional interactions, the student may be able to build trust with the institution and the administrator and view them as truly wanting the student to reenroll after a disciplinary suspension. However, these efforts take time, personnel, and resources. As a result, student conduct offices need to be well-staffed offices, not just only to handle current caseloads, but to also be able to develop students, build connections with students, and ensure the student fully understands what is happening and does not feel like just another number who the institution is removing. For these reasons, it is necessary for current administrators to execute assessment and reporting efforts such as pre- and post- surveys of students that experience the student conduct process, end of the year reports that include types of

disciplinary incidents, recidivism, sanctions assigned, and trends. These efforts could educate administrators so that they can be supportive in building student conduct offices that are equipped with the tools, financial resources, and staff members needed to change the educational and student-centered culture of student conduct. Ultimately, these efforts will aid student conduct administration in moving away from being transactional and instead, focus on living the mission of being student-centered and educational.

Future Research

This study has provided multiple other ideas for continuing research within student conduct, disciplinary suspensions, and reenrollment. The following section provides ideas and recommendations that build on this study in order to further the area of student conduct and qualitative research.

One recommendation for future research is to analyze success and degree completion after reenrollment. Are students that reenroll after a disciplinary suspension likely to graduate? The findings would build on this study's conclusions by assessing the value of disciplinary suspensions when it comes to reenrollment.

This study supports Dannells' (1997) research in which he stated that student discipline continues to be an excellent opportunity for developmental efforts. As discussed in the previous chapter, the findings align with this philosophy since the participants described growth as a result of experiencing the disciplinary suspension. What is core cause of the reported "growth"? Is it due to the overall experience, or can it be linked to something specific? The participants in this study self-reported "growth" as a product of the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience. A study could be designed to determine the origin of that "growth." This would

further define disciplinary suspensions as relevant parts of the developmental student conduct philosophy.

Can an institution create measurable learning outcomes as a result of the disciplinary suspension? This study can assist in responding to this question. These college students self-reported growth. But, how can it be measured? Engaging in additional research on the college student disciplinary suspension can yield results that will allow for the production of measurable learning outcomes, which can then be used as part of the re-enrollment process.

How do personal characteristics influence the college student disciplinary suspension experience? Do men experience this differently than women? If so, why? Does it look different for individuals of varying socio-economic status? My study did not explore these elements of the Relation to the Self's part of Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory in depth. Therefore, a study that further analyzes these elements would conduct a mixed methods analysis utilizing lived experiences and personal demographic characteristics. The results could influence how practitioners assist students as they transition into a disciplinary suspension. This would be important since according to Stimpson and Janosik (2007), “. . . if the student conduct adjudication process is meant to be educational, examining the likelihood of reenrollment should [be] part of the decision making process” (p. 509).

Why do some students not reenroll after a disciplinary suspension? What about those students that enrolled in another institution and never returned to the institution that suspended them? In part, and in order to avoid a deficit perspective, this study strictly focused on students that reenrolled. Conducting a study that focuses on the opposite might yield a counter-narrative that could continue to broaden the understanding of the college student disciplinary suspension

and reenrollment experience and assist with the reenrollment of college students after serving a disciplinary suspension.

Every institution has unique student conduct policies and procedures. While deciding whether or not a student violated the code of conduct is not as subjective, determining the sanction, in this case, the length of the suspension, could often be subjective. The severity of the violation, institutional baseline (previous sanctions for similar cases), and the student's previous misconduct may all be taken into consideration when deciding the length of the disciplinary suspension. However, this study highlighted that there is some variation on the reasons why these participants were suspended. For example, one student was suspended for one year for using a parking permit that did not belong to him, while another student was suspended for the same length of time for being in possession of marijuana. Given this variability, it would be beneficial engage in additional research where a series of cases are designed and provided to student conduct administrators. Using the information provided to them, they are asked to outline a level of responsibility, assign appropriate sanctions, and provide a rationale. The findings could provide additional best practices and recommendations around sanctioning in student conduct.

During the recruitment phase of this study, several colleagues at prestigious institutions shared that most of their students that were suspended would return to their campus. When prompted as to why they thought this was the case, they shared that the name of the institution and its reputation were major factors for students to reenroll. Unfortunately, none of these specific colleagues that shared this information were able to assist with this study because of their institutional policies and "red tape." It would be beneficial to design a study that analyzes and focuses on the influence of an institution's prestige, reputation, and "name" on a college student's rationale for reenrolling after a disciplinary suspension experience. These results could

provide an additional lens as to why college students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension.

Theories

Is the end of one transition, the beginning of another? As a college student finishes their disciplinary suspension, are they now beginning a new transition as they re-enroll? How do multiple transitions intersect? It is difficult to isolate one specific event, in this case, a disciplinary suspension, into a single transition since there are many factors that influence it. Schlossberg (2007) explained the concept of *counter transitions*, and stated, “Events and non-events never seem to come in single file” (Kindle Location 601). This would imply that a disciplinary suspension does not happen in a vacuum. Schlossberg (2007) also added, “Events in one area of your life trickle or tumble into other areas, and each one makes managing the others somewhat more difficult” (Kindle Locations 603-604). The lack of a vacuum was present in this study as various parts of the student’s lives were altered, causing additional stressors. Conducting a study in which counter transitions are explored in the disciplinary suspension context would assist researchers and practitioners to further understand the intricacies, stressors, dynamics, and overall transition that students experience when they enter a disciplinary suspension, bringing an additional dimension to Transition theory.

What happens once the student re-enrolls at the institution after a disciplinary suspension? Is the work of the institution complete once the student reenrolls? What else should be executed by the student or the institution? A study could be designed to analyze the Outcomes of Karp and Clear’s (2000) community justice model, which are Restoration, Integration, Community Capacity, and Community Satisfaction. The study would serve as a sequel for this study by providing a closer look at the disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience such

as: how the community is restored from the harm caused by the student that reenrolled after a disciplinary suspension, how the student is integrated back at the institution after reenrollment, “the ability of community members to enforce mutually agreed-upon behavioral standards” (Karp & Clear, 2002, p. 28), such as the code of conduct, and the community’s satisfaction with the student conduct process.

By engaging in these recommendations, this study, just like Stimpson and Janosik’s (2007) study, hopes that these articulated recommendations are used to better understand disciplinary suspensions, improve the reenrollment process, and increase the likelihood of a student reenrolling after a disciplinary suspension.

Conclusion: Persistence with Resistance

This is not just a conclusion on a dissertation or a chapter. This is a conclusion on the transitions of these students. This study provided microphones, speakers, and a stage for the voices of six college students as they shared their lived experiences as reenrolled students after a disciplinary suspension. There is an indirect relationship and connection between the student and the institution during a disciplinary suspension. Researchers need to continue engaging in research so that new and applicable data can be unearthed. Student affairs scholars and practitioners need to continue being creative about how data can be requested and provided mitigate using FERPA and institutional “red tape” as responses to empirical research and program improvement requests. Lastly, student conduct administrators need to make sure that suspensions are welcoming college students to return while engaging in practices that are truly student-centered.

This study demonstrated that disciplinary suspensions are dynamic and multi-faceted, provide growth and development for college students, and can be a meaningful and important

part of the college student conduct process. By exploring the college student disciplinary suspension experience and further analyzing why students reenrolled after serving a disciplinary suspension, this study further centered student conduct systems as places of student learning. This study also gave voice to the actual students' experiences who reenroll in their institution after serving a disciplinary suspension, which will hopefully inform and enhance student conduct administration and student affairs praxis. This study helped to fill the gap in the literature regarding qualitative research in student conduct and disciplinary suspensions.

The six college students that participated in this study are, in part, products of the systems, policies, and procedures created by higher education, student affairs, and student conduct. As such, these six college students should be seen as inspirations and examples of persistence with resistance. These students did not allow a disciplinary suspension define them as individuals or students. Instead, they navigated their new realities, leaned on their confidants, grew, and learned from the transitions. Through these transitions, they resisted failure, defied the odds, proved that they wanted complete a college degree, returned to their institution, and succeeded in their own unique way.

APPENDIX A: SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENT

I am a Ph.D. Student in Educational Administration: Higher Education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I am currently working on my dissertation titled, “A Phenomenological Study of the College Student Disciplinary Suspension and Reenrollment Experience.”

Requested Assistance: I am seeking your assistance in forwarding this information to participants that meet the following criteria:

- An individual that was suspended from an institution of higher education
- An individual that was suspended for a disciplinary reason and not an academic reason such as a low G.P.A.
- Once the suspension was complete, the individual reenrolled in at least one subsequent semester/quarter/term at the institution that the individual was suspended from

Purpose of my Study: This study will explore college students’ experiences once they are suspended, and what might contribute to their decision to reenroll to that same institution. This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by further analyzing the college student disciplinary suspension experience, including why college students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension, and give voice to the college student suspension experience. This study aims to highlight and assess the educational nature of higher education student conduct systems through the disciplinary suspension with the additional aids of appropriate theoretical and methodological frameworks.

The results of this research will contribute to the fields of higher education, particularly to giving voice to the actual students’ experiences who reenroll in their institution after serving a disciplinary suspension, which can inform student conduct administration and student affairs practices. This study has received Human Subjects and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (# 2018-00246).” Findings will be shared publicly within the dissertation itself and in an intended journal or conference publication.

In order to complete this dissertation, I request that you please forward this information, including my contact details below, to any individual that meets this criteria and might be interested in participating in this study. Please note that I am not requesting for you to provide me with the individual’s identity or contact information.

When an individual reaches out to me, I will coordinate an interview date/time with them, based on their availability. Participants will be provided with a gift card for their time.

Privacy and Confidentiality: All information collected will remain confidential and the participant’s identity will remain anonymous.

Questions: If you have any further questions regarding the research project, I can be contacted by phone- **(805) 889-3727** or by email at **iarl@hawaii.edu**. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Chris Lucas at **cmlucas@hawaii.edu**. If you have any questions or concerns regarding human subjects research and rights for the University of Hawaii at Mānoa please contact the Office for Research Compliance by phone at (808) 956-5007 or **uhirb@hawaii.edu**.

I appreciate your time and assistance with forwarding this information to any potential participants that might be interested in participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Isaac A. Rodriguez Lupercio
Ph.D. Student in Educational Administration: Higher Education
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

APPENDIX B: E-MAIL ADVERTISEMENT

Hello Colleague,

My name is Isaac A. Rodriguez Lupercio. I am a Ph.D. Student in Educational Administration: Higher Education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I am currently working on my dissertation titled, “A Phenomenological Study of the College Student Disciplinary Suspension and Reenrollment Experience.”

Purpose of my Study: This study will explore college students’ experiences once they are suspended, and what might contribute to their decision to reenroll to that same institution. This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by further analyzing the college student disciplinary suspension experience, including why college students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension, and give voice to the college student suspension experience. This study aims to highlight and assess the educational nature of higher education student conduct systems through the disciplinary suspension with the additional aids of appropriate theoretical and methodological frameworks.

The results of this research will contribute to the fields of higher education, particularly to giving voice to the actual students’ experiences who reenroll in their institution after serving a disciplinary suspension, which can inform student conduct administration and student affairs practices. This study has received Human Subjects and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (# 2018-00246).” Findings will be shared publicly within the dissertation itself and in an intended journal or conference publication.

Requested Assistance: I am seeking your assistance in forwarding this information to participants that meet the following criteria:

- An individual that was suspended from an institution of higher education
- An individual that was suspended for a disciplinary reason and not an academic reason such as a low G.P.A.
- Once the suspension was complete, the individual reenrolled in at least one subsequent semester/quarter/term at the institution that the individual was suspended from

In order to complete this dissertation, I request that you please forward this information, including my contact details below, to any individual that meets this criteria and might be interested in participating in this study. Please note that I am not requesting for you to provide me with the individual’s identity or contact information.

When an individual reaches out to me, I will coordinate an interview date/time with them, based on their availability. Participants will be provided with a gift card for their time.

Privacy and Confidentiality: All information collected will remain confidential and the participant’s identity will remain anonymous.

Questions: If you have any further questions regarding the research project, I can be contacted by phone- **(805) 889-3727** or by email at **iarl@hawaii.edu**. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Chris Lucas at **cmlucas@hawaii.edu**. If you have any questions or concerns regarding human subjects research and rights for the University of Hawaii at Mānoa please contact the Office for Research Compliance by phone at (808) 956-5007 or **uhirb@hawaii.edu**.

I appreciate your time and assistance with forwarding this information to any potential participants that might be interested in participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Isaac A. Rodriguez Lupercio
Ph.D. Student in Educational Administration: Higher Education
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

APPENDIX C: INDIVIDUAL INVITATION

Dear (individual's name),

I would like to share an opportunity to participate in a dissertation research study.

Isaac A. Rodriguez Lupercio is a Ph.D. student in Educational Administration: Higher Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He is currently working on his dissertation titled, "A Phenomenological Study of the College Student Disciplinary Suspension and Reenrollment Experience."

Invitation to Participate: You are welcome to participate in this study if you meet the following criteria:

- An individual that was suspended from an institution of higher education
- An individual that was suspended for a disciplinary reason and not an academic reason such as a low G.P.A.
- Once the suspension was complete, the individual reenrolled in at least one subsequent semester/quarter/term at the institution that the individual was suspended from

If you would like to participate, you may contact Isaac at (805) 889-3727 or by email at iarl@hawaii.edu.

Purpose of the Study: This study will explore college students' experiences once they are suspended, and what might contribute to their decision to reenroll to that same institution. This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by further analyzing the college student disciplinary suspension experience, including why college students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension, and give voice to the college student suspension experience. This study aims to highlight and assess the educational nature of higher education student conduct systems through the disciplinary suspension with the additional aids of appropriate theoretical and methodological frameworks.

The results of this research will contribute to the fields of higher education, particularly to giving voice to the actual students' experiences who reenroll in their institution after serving a disciplinary suspension, which can inform student conduct administration and student affairs practices. This study has received Human Subjects and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (# 2018-00246). Findings will be shared publicly within the dissertation itself and in an intended journal or conference publication.

Please note that I will not be sharing your contact information. When you reach out to Isaac, he will coordinate an interview date/time with you, based on your availability. The interview may take up to two hours. Participants will be provided with a gift card for their time.

Privacy and Confidentiality: All information collected will remain confidential and the participant's identity will remain anonymous.

Questions: If you have any further questions regarding the research project, Isaac can be contacted by phone- (805) 889-3727 or by email at iarl@hawaii.edu. You may also contact Isaac's advisor, Dr. Chris Lucas at cmlucas@hawaii.edu. If you have any questions or concerns

regarding human subjects research and rights for the University of Hawaii at Mānoa please contact the Office for Research Compliance by phone at (808) 956-5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu.

I appreciate your time in considering your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)

APPENDIX D: AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

Purpose: This study will explore college students' experiences once they are suspended, and what might contribute to their decision to reenroll to that same institution. This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by further analyzing the college student disciplinary suspension experience, including why college students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension, and give voice to the college student suspension experience. This will include exploring: why students chose to reenroll, what processes they navigated in order to reenroll, their disposition towards reenrolling and returning to campus, and their experiences following reenrollment. This study aims to highlight and assess the educational nature of higher education student conduct systems through the disciplinary suspension with the additional aids of appropriate theoretical and methodological frameworks.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary and you may stop your participation at any time, without any penalty or loss to you. You may refuse to include your responses in this study at any time, without consequence and questions.

Activities and Time Commitment: If you do participate in this project, I will meet with you via Skype/Facetime or in-person to complete one interview at a time and location (if available), which is convenient for you. The interview may take up to two hours and will consist of about 19 interview questions total. The questions asked will cover a range of your suspension and re-enrollment experience. Sample questions include: "How would you describe the time during your suspension?" and "Why did you choose to reenroll after your suspension at the same institution?" With your consent, I will audio-record the interview session, so that I can transcribe and analyze the content. If you agree to participate, you will be one of approximately 12 participants in the study.

Benefits and Risks: This research will provide you with the opportunity to contribute to the limited research available in this area. The results of this research will contribute to the fields of higher education, particularly to giving voice to the actual students' experiences who reenroll in their institution after serving a disciplinary suspension, which can inform student conduct administration and student affairs practices. I believe there is little risk to you in participating in this research. However, during the interviews you may become distressed or uncomfortable in answering the questions or discussing the topics. If this happens at anytime, you may skip the question, take a break, stop the interview, or withdraw from the project altogether. If at any time you become uncomfortable or distressed, I can also provide you with a referral to institutional services.

Privacy and Confidentiality: All information collected will remain confidential and your identity will remain anonymous. All information will be stored in a safe, locked place, where only my advisor and I will have access. After reviewing and analyzing the data, all data will be destroyed. The results will be presented using pseudonyms as to further protect your identity and participation within the project. All findings will be reported in a way that protects your privacy and confidentiality. Other agencies that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

Questions: If you have any further questions regarding the research project, I can be contacted by phone- (805) 889-3727 or by email at iarl@hawaii.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Chris Lucas at cmlucas@hawaii.edu. You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu. to discuss problems, concerns and questions; obtain information; or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit <http://go.hawaii.edu/jRd> for more information on your rights as a research participant. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Please check all of the following items that apply to you:

_____ I was suspended from an institution of higher education

_____ I was suspended for a disciplinary reason and not an academic reason such as a low G.P.A.

_____ Once the suspension was complete, I reenrolled in at least one subsequent semester/quarter/term at the institution that I was suspended from

Please check either "Yes" or "No" to the following:

☐ Yes ☐ No I consent to be re-contacted for follow-up in the future.

☐ Yes ☐ No I consent to be audio-recorded for the interview portion of this research.

I have read and understood the above consent and agree to participate in this research project.

Print Name

Date

Signature

_____ Copy Provided to Participant

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Opening script:

Thank you once again for being willing to participate in this interview as part of my study. As I mentioned before, the purpose of this research is to explore college students' experiences once they are suspended, and what might contribute to their decision to reenroll to that same institution. This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by further analyzing the college student disciplinary suspension experience, including why college students reenroll after serving a disciplinary suspension, and give voice to the college student suspension experience. This study hopes to highlight and assess the educational nature of higher education student conduct systems through the disciplinary suspension with the additional aids of appropriate theoretical and methodological frameworks

Our interview today will last approximately up to two hours and will consist of about 15 interview questions total. The questions asked will cover a range of your suspension and re-enrollment experience.

- *[review aspects of consent form]*
- *You completed a consent form indicating that I have your permission (or not) to audio record our conversation. Are you still ok with me recording (or not) our conversation today? ___ Yes ___ No*

• *If yes: Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.*

If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes of our conversation.

- *Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? [Discuss questions]*

If any questions (or other questions) arise at any point in this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions.

How do college students experience disciplinary suspensions?

Time of suspension

1. Please share the semester and the year of when the suspension occurred.
2. How would you describe yourself at the time of your suspension? Or, what were your thoughts and feelings at the time of your suspension?
3. Tell me about your disciplinary suspension.
4. Describe your thoughts when you found out about your disciplinary suspension?

During the suspension

5. How would you describe the time when you were suspended from campus? What were your thoughts and feelings while you were suspended? Why?
6. What did you do while you were suspended? Why?
7. Who or what were you able to rely on during your suspension? Why? What did you say?

Why do college students re-enroll after serving a disciplinary suspension?

8. What were your thoughts and feelings towards reenrollment while you were suspended?
9. Who or what was your support system during the reenrollment process?
10. Why did you choose to reenroll after your suspension at the same institutions tion?

11. How would you describe the reenrollment process?
12. How did the disciplinary suspension affect your decision making?

How do college student experience reenrollment following a disciplinary suspension?

Transition of returning to campus

13. Please share the semester and the year of when you returned to campus in order to continue your coursework.
14. Describe the process of reenrolling. Or, what were the steps, procedures, timeline?
15. How did you feel about this process of reenrolling?

Present

16. How would you describe your suspension now?
17. How do you feel about the suspension and the administrators now?
18. How would you describe yourself today as a result of the suspension and reenrollment?
19. How would you describe the suspension and reenrollment experience to someone who has never been suspended?

Before we conclude this interview, is there something about your disciplinary suspension and reenrollment experience that we have not yet discussed?

Concluding Points:

Thank you for your time and participation. I just want to review these next few steps:

- *May I contact you for follow up questions? What is the best method of contacting you?*
- *What are your contact information details (phone number, email, mailing address)?*
- *Upon completion of the transcript, I will send you a copy so that you can check the transcript for accuracy.*
- *Is there a pseudonym that you would like to use / choose? Or, would you prefer that I pick one?-*
- *Timeline- I hope to have transcripts ready by late summer.*

Again, thank you for sharing your story and experiences with me.

APPENDIX F: IRB APPROVAL FORM (ORIGINAL)



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
SYSTEM

Office of Research Compliance
Human Studies Program

TO: Lucas, Christopher, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Educational Administration
FROM: Rodriguez Lupercio, Isaac, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Chancellor's Office
PROTOCOL TITLE: Rivera, Victoria, Interim Dir, Ofc of Rsch Compliance, Social&Behav Exempt
FUNDING SOURCE: A Phenomenological Study of the College Student Disciplinary Suspension Experience
PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2018-00246
Approval Date: May 11, 2018 Expiration Date: December 31, 2999

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

This letter is your record of the Human Studies Program approval of this study as exempt.

On May 11, 2018, the University of Hawaii (UH) Human Studies Program approved this study as exempt from federal regulations pertaining to the protection of human research participants. The authority for the exemption applicable to your study is documented in the Code of Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 46.101(b) 2.

Exempt studies are subject to the ethical principles articulated in The Belmont Report, found at the OHRP Website www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html.

Exempt studies do not require regular continuing review by the Human Studies Program. However, if you propose to modify your study, you must receive approval from the Human Studies Program prior to implementing any changes. You can submit your proposed changes via email at uhirb@hawaii.edu. (The subject line should read: Exempt Study Modification.) The Human Studies Program may review the exempt status at that time and request an application for approval as non-exempt research.

In order to protect the confidentiality of research participants, we encourage you to destroy private information which can be linked to the identities of individuals as soon as it is reasonable to do so. Signed consent forms, as applicable to your study, should be maintained for at least the duration of your project.

This approval does not expire. However, please notify the Human Studies Program when your study is complete. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your study.

If you have any questions relating to the protection of human research participants, please contact the Human Studies Program by phone at 956-5007 or email uhirb@hawaii.edu. We wish you success in carrying out your research project.

1960 East-West Road
Biomedical Sciences Building B104
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Telephone: (808) 956-5007
Fax: (808) 956-8683
An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

APPENDIX G: IRB APPROVAL FORM (FINAL)



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of HAWAI'I®
SYSTEM

Office of Research Compliance
Human Studies Program

TO: Lucas, Christopher, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Educational Administration
FROM: Rodriguez Lupercio, Isaac, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Chancellor's Office
PROTOCOL TITLE: Rivera, Victoria, Dir, Ofc of Rsch Compliance, Social&Behav Exempt
A Phenomenological Study of the College Student Disciplinary Suspension and
Reenrollment Experience
FUNDING SOURCE:
PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2018-00246
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NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

This letter is your record of the Human Studies Program approval of this study as exempt.

On October 24, 2018, the request for IRB approval of changes to your exempt project noted above has been reviewed and approved. The proposed amendments will be added into your current project file. The proposed changes do not alter the exempt status of your project. The authority for the exemption applicable to your study is documented in the Code of Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 46.101(b) 2.

This approval does not expire. However, please notify the Human Studies Program when your study is complete. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your study.

If you have any questions relating to the protection of human research participants, please contact the Human Studies Program by phone at 956-5007 or email uhirb@hawaii.edu. We wish you success in carrying out your research project.

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